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OUTLINE MEDITATIONS



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BY

MADAME CECILIA



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PREFACE

These Outlines are published in the hope that they may be useful for the purpose of private meditation or for instructions to sodalities. Those who are accustomed to meditate daily are sometimes glad to have a subject outlined, rather than fully developed. Many nuns have charge of different sodalities and, possibly, they might find these Outlines useful, when press of work prevents them from preparing an instruction for their sodalities. The subjects are grouped according to the ecclesiastical seasons. In the different sections most of the outlines bear directly upon the mysteries of the respective seasons; a few, however, bear only indirectly upon them.

MADAME CECILIA.

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ADVENT SUBJECTS

1. ADVENT LESSONS

"It is now the hour for us to rise from sleep, for now our salvation is nearer than when we became believers." (Rom. xiii. 11.)

INTRODUCTION:

Sleep is an image of death. There is a spiritual "sleeping-sickness" which attacks the soul; we call it tepidity.

THE KEY-NOTE OF ADVENT IS "AWAKE!"

This includes watchfulness and fervor:

In preparation for the coming festival of Christmas.

In preparation for the coming death and judgment.

MOTIVES FOR AROUSING OURSELVES FROM SPIRITUAL SLOTH OR TEPIDITY IN GOD'S SERVICE:

We are so naturally inclined to slacken down.

We have slept too long already in the past. Our span of life is so short, so uncertain.

Every hour brings duties and responsibilities.

Our own soul offers such a wide field of labor.

Earth's pleasures are enticing; they deaden the perceptions of the soul to eternal realities.

We must help to arouse other souls, and this implies being spiritually awake ourselves. Satan is ever on the alert, "seeking whom he may devour."

The reward of vigilance exceeds man's conceptions and is eternal.

SIGNS OF FERVOR OR SPIRITUAL ACTIVITY:

A sincere desire to be fervent.

A firm will never to be discouraged, to die "climbing."¹

This leads us to take bravely all the necessary means for advancing in virtue.

A real zeal for spreading the knowledge of the Faith.

HINDRANCES TO FERVOR:

Indifference and apathy as regards religion.
Attachment to worldly things; e.g., pleasures, ease, comfort, inordinate love of creatures.

Wilful negligence in little things.

Attachment to some particular fault or imperfection.

Being too much absorbed by work or cares.

APPLICATION:

How do I stand as regards watchfulness?
Wherein do I fail the oftenest?

¹ On the tomb of an Alpine guide in the Alps these words are engraved: "He died climbing. R. I. P."

2. OUR PREPARATION FOR CHRISTMAS

“A voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight His paths. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways plain. And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.” (Luke iii. 4-6; Is. xl. 3.)

INTRODUCTION:

The prophet uses the similitude of an Eastern monarch, who when going on a journey had the roads prepared and sent on heralds ahead to announce his arrival. Thus, St. John the Baptist's mission was to prepare the Jews for the coming of their Redeemer. The words can be applied to the Christian's preparation for the holy season of Christmas.

EVERY VALLEY SHALL BE FILLED; I.E.,

Indifference must be shaken off.
Negligences must be repaired.
Despondency must be overcome.

MOUNTAIN AND HILL BROUGHT LOW; I.E.,

Greater and lesser obstacles to the King's progress removed. This involves:
Conquering pride.
Detaching the soul from sin.
Overcoming bad habits.

CROOKED PATHS STRAIGHTENED; HENCE:

Purity of intention.

Real earnestness in serving God.

No following "the path of least resistance."

ROUGH PATHS LEVELED, WHICH INVOLVES:

Rectifying the inconsistencies of our daily lives.

Controlling our moods and fancies.

Removing what might cause our neighbor to stumble—avoiding scandal.

THE RESULTS OF THIS WORK IN OUR SOULS:

Christ will dwell more fully in our souls.

We shall see the salvation of the Lord when

He visits us. Cf. "This day I must abide in thy house. . . . This day is salvation come to this house." (Luke xix. 5, 9.)

Our souls will enjoy that peace promised "to men of good will."

APPLICATION:

What sacrifice does the Divine Master ask of us?

What can we give Him as a proof of our desire to receive His visit?

3. "SURELY, I COME QUICKLY"

"He . . . saith . . . Surely, I come quickly. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus." (Apoc. xxii. 20.)

INTRODUCTION:

Each year, during the holy season of Advent, the Church reminds us of the various Advents of Jesus, as an incentive to vigilance and fervor.

WHAT ARE WE EXPECTING?

The coming of death.

The judgment which follows.

The general judgment.

The final decision as to our eternal dwelling-place—heaven or hell.

In each of these events the Christian soul meets her Lord.

HOW DOES JESUS COME TO US DURING OUR LIFE UPON EARTH?

By His grace through the ministry of His priests.

By the Holy Eucharist.

By His visitations of mercy and of chastisement.

At death when He comes to take us unto Himself.

WHAT RECEPTION DOES HE FIND WHEN HE COMES?

Hostility on the part of the wicked.

Indifference on the part of lax Catholics.

Often "a closed door": His own receive Him not.

A selfish, grasping spirit on the part of those who would receive the crown without having carried the Cross.

A hearty, loyal welcome from the saints.

HOW WOULD HE HAVE US RECEIVE HIM?

With earnest longings for His Advent, whichever form it takes.

In a pure dwelling and the place of honor therein.

With gifts, consisting of victories over the devil.

WHAT DOES HE BRING AS ROYAL BOUNTIES?

Pardon of sin.

Peace of soul.

Joy surpassing understanding.

Spiritual illumination.

Often His Cross, as His most precious gift.

APPLICATION:

How do we prepare for His coming?

What gift does He ask of us?

4. ON DEATH

"It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment." (Heb. ix. 27.)

INTRODUCTION:

Nothing so certain as death, *the one certainty* amid the shifting sands of time. Yet nothing is so difficult as for the individual to realize that he personally must die. "Each man deems all others mortal except himself." Yet each Christian can make Job's words his own: "I know that Thou wilt deliver me to death, where a house is appointed for every one that liveth." (Job xxx. 23.)

DEATH IS A PUNISHMENT:

Had man never sinned, there would have been no death.

Cf. "In what day soever thou shalt eat of it, thou shalt die the death." (Gen. ii. 17.)

"By one man sin entered into this world, and by sin death." (Rom. v. 12.)

"In Adam all die." (1 Cor. xv. 22.)

DEATH IS A SEPARATION FROM:

Our bodies—an integral part of man.

This world, the only dwelling-place we have known.

All near and dear to us.

DEATH IS A TORCH:

Lighting up the ephemeral things of earth.
Guiding us along our life's path.
Helping us to live for the things unseen.

DEATH IS A MEETING:

With those whom we have loved and who
have preceded us into eternity.
With the saints and just of all ages.
With the angels of God, our faithful guardians.
With Mary our Immaculate Mother.
With Jesus our Saviour.

DEATH IS A RECOMPENSE:

For the labors and sorrows of our exile.
The death of God's saints is precious in His sight.
It satisfies our longing to possess our God,
to be wholly His.
It gives us an *eternal* reward—the precariousness of tenure spoils all earthly joys.

APPLICATION:

Christians should be ready to welcome death,
which involves dying daily to all that in
our souls or in the world
Opposes our sanctification and consequently
Opposes our salvation.

5. "HE COMETH WITH THE CLOUDS"

"Behold He cometh with the clouds, and every eye shall see Him." (Apoc. i. 7.)

INTRODUCTION :

God led the Israelites by day in the desert by a pillar of cloud. This cloud was

A guide in the desert.

A protection from the heat.

A protection from their enemies (when it stood between them and the Egyptians).

A proof of God's power.

A sign of His presence with His people.

WHILE UPON EARTH, JESUS CONCEALED HIS
DIVINITY AS WITH A CLOUD :

By His Sacred Humanity.

By taking the form of a slave.

Now and then the cloud lifted, as at His Transfiguration.

Resurrection.

Ascension.

Finally, "a cloud received Him" out of His disciples' sight.

He will come upon the clouds of heaven "to judge the living and the dead."

CLOUDS STILL CONCEAL AND REVEAL OUR
LORD'S PRESENCE.

Under the Eucharistic species He "appears in the cloud." (Lev. xvi. 2.)

Trials and temptations.

Cf. "He is like a refining fire . . . He shall sit refining and cleansing . . . He shall purify the sons of Levi and shall refine them as gold and as silver."
(Mal. iii. 2, 3.)

The voice of authority. "He that heareth you heareth Me."

The overruling of Providence. All coördained by God for our good.

Spiritual desolation. Cf. "I come to thee in the darkness of a cloud." (Ex. xix. 9.) "Make not haste in the time of clouds." (Ecclus. ii. 2.)

WE CAN PIERCE THE CLOUD THAT CONCEALS OUR BLESSED LORD:

By prayer—that "of the humble pierceth the sky."

By firm faith.

By confidence that "we shall be taken up in the clouds to meet Christ."

By resignation to God's will.

By courage in going forward—a cloud is not a stone wall.

APPLICATION:

Trust in God when the clouds overshadow us; sooner or later the day will dawn and "the shadows flee away."

Never give way to despondency and inaction when God sends spiritual clouds or temporal trials.

6. THE LAST JUDGMENT

“They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with much power and majesty.” (Matt. xxiv. 30.) *“The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with the angels of His power.”* (2 Thess. i. 7.)

INTRODUCTION:

Contemplate that scene on Mount Olivet in Holy Week. It was evening, and, sitting on the slopes of Olivet, Jesus spoke of the destruction of Jerusalem and of the end of the world. Then four of the apostles question Jesus: “Tell us when shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of Thy coming and of the consummation of the world?” (Matt. xxiv. 3.)

SIGNS OF THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN:

Nature’s convulsions—sun, moon, and stars failing in their courses.

The cross shall appear in the heavens heralding the Coming of the Judge.

Great tribulations shall precede the last day.

**YET, IN SPITE OF CERTAIN INDICES OF JESUS’
COMING, THE DAY AND THE HOUR ARE
UNKNOWN:**

He comes as a thief in the night.

When social relations are going on—“marrying and giving in marriage,” feasting, etc.

When civil relations are being attended to—
buying and selling.

When men least expect that Advent.

HOW CAN CHRISTIANS PREPARE FOR THAT
DAY OF RETRIBUTION?

The Scriptures answer this question:

“In this is the charity of God perfected
with us, that we may have confidence in
the day of judgment.” (1 John iv. 17.)

“Judge not, that you may not be judged;
for with what judgment you judge, you
shall be judged.” (Matt. vii. 1.)

“Watch and pray, for ye know not when
the time is.” (Mark xiv. 33.)

“Trade till I come.” (Luke xix. 13.)

“Perfect charity casteth out fear.” (1
John iv. 18.)

APPLICATION:

How far are we preparing for the Last Day

By charity toward God and our neighbor?

By vigilance and prayer?

By utilizing the talents confided to us by
God?

7. PURGATORY

"Some shall be saved as by fire."

INTRODUCTION:

That there is a place of purification after death is based on four grounds:

The teaching of the Scriptures.

That of the Catholic Church.

The Jewish belief that "It is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead."

Reason itself teaches that there must be some intermediate state, otherwise God could not be just.

WHAT THE SOUL SEES ON ENTERING PURGATORY:

Many it knew upon earth.

Many it had thought to be in heaven.

Many it had thought to be in hell.

Some perhaps suffering for sins which that soul had helped them to commit.

Souls in different degrees of purity.

Souls winging their flight to heaven, at which those who remain rejoice.

Angels watching over, consoling, encouraging those committed to their charge.

WHAT THE SOUL HEARS IN PURGATORY:

Acts of entire submission to God's holy will.

Acts of thanksgiving for all God's mercies.

Acts of regret at ever having offended God.

Acts of humility.

Acts of desire for the Living God.

In a word, sentiments so different from those generally heard in this world.

WHAT THE SOUL EXPERIENCES IN PURGATORY:

Shame and confusion at the thought of past sins.

A peace that passeth understanding—for that soul is sure of salvation.

Passionate longing to possess God, whom the soul realizes to be its only good and for whom it was created.

Intense suffering on account of its perfect union with God being deferred.

Increase of hope and charity as the moment of its deliverance draws nearer.

APPLICATION:

Take home to ourselves St. Paul's words, divinely inspired: "Now if any man build upon this foundation (which is Christ Jesus), gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, every man's work shall be manifest, for the day of the Lord shall declare it, because it shall be revealed in fire; and the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is. If any man's work abide, which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work burn, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire." (1 Cor. iii. 15.)

CHRISTMAS SUBJECTS

8. THE BIRTH OF JESUS

“A Child is born to us, and a Son is given to us.” (Is. ix. 6.)

INTRODUCTION:

Consider the Incarnate Son of God, as He lies in the humble manger. Mary and Joseph kneel and adore.

WHAT JESUS SOUGHT WHEN HE CAME AS A LITTLE CHILD:

The love of His own—yet “they received Him not.”

To be a Saviour to all.

To do His Father’s will—“Lo, I come to do Thy will.”

Extreme poverty and, as a consequence, Suffering for Himself and for those dear to Him.

To give us an example of all virtues.

HOW WAS HE RECEIVED?

With indifference as regards the worldly.

With hatred by those who would not have Him rule them (e.g., Herod).

With love and joy by Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, the Magi, the angels.

WHAT GIFTS DID THE BABE OF BETHLEHEM
BESTOW?

Peace with God—through the forgiveness of
sins.

Peace with our neighbor, whom He bids us
love.

Peace with ourselves, by removing all that
tends to disquiet us and bidding us trust
Him.

Joy in that heaven is at last to be opened to
men.

APPLICATION:

In our Christmas communion, the Divine
Infant comes to us. What gift can we
offer Him as a proof of love? Let our
present be:

A careful preparation for His visit.

A reverent reception.

An earnest thanksgiving for "His un-
speakable gift" in union with Our
Blessed Lady and the heavenly hosts.

9. THE HOLY NAME OF JESUS

"I will glorify Thy name forever." (Ps. lxxxv. 12.) *"Thou shalt call His name Jesus."* (Luke i. 31.)

INTRODUCTION:

The name stands for the person, his qualities, his deeds (good or bad), his reputation. What thoughts are brought to mind by such names as Judas, Satan, St. John, holy Simeon, Our Lady, Jesus!

THE NAME OF JESUS IS A NAME OF POWER;
E.G.,

"In the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth; and every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father."
(Philipp. ii. 10, 11.)

St. Peter and St. John healed the lame man by invoking the name of Jesus.

"There is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved."
(Acts iv. 12.)

"By His name all receive remission of sins."
(Acts x. 43.)

The devils were subject to the apostles when they invoked the name of Jesus.

THE NAME OF JESUS BRINGS CONSOLATION,
PARDON, HOPE, AND JOY.

“Thou . . . art plenteous in mercy to all
that call upon Thee.” (Ps. lxxxv. 5.)

“For Thy name’s sake Thou wilt lead me
and nourish me.” (Ps. xxx. 4.)

“For Thy name’s sake, O Lord, Thou wilt
pardon my sin, for it is great.” (Ps.
xxiv. 11.)

“In Thy name they shall rejoice all the day.”
(Ps. lxxxviii. 17.)

OUR DUTIES TOWARD THE HOLY NAME:

To pronounce it reverently

In prayer.

In temptation.

To trust in that holy name

In life.

In death.

To make it known by word and deed.

Cf. “I have manifested Thy name.”
(John xvii. 6.) “Hallowed be Thy
name.” (Matt. vi. 9.)

OUR REWARD:

Having honored the Holy Name upon earth,
we shall glorify it eternally in heaven.

“His name shall be written” on the fore-
heads of the redeemed.

10. LESSONS FROM THE EPIPHANY

"We have seen His star in the East and are come to adore Him." (Matt. ii. 2.)

INTRODUCTION:

The Magi not only saw the star, but they accepted it as God's messenger and followed it promptly and courageously. "We have seen . . . we are come."

THE FAITHFUL ARE GUIDED BY GOD'S HOLY WILL AS BY A STAR:

Thus the Church applies it in her liturgy.

Cf. "Give unto Thy people at all times surely to discern Thy holy will, and strenuously to labor in the fulfilment thereof." (Collect for Sunday after Epiphany.)

God does not leave us in darkness; He guides us

By conscience.

By special inspirations.

By the voice of our superiors.

Our "star" may be:

Some clear duty.

A practice of piety the soul feels called to take up.

A sacrifice for which God asks.

The practice of some special virtue.

Some work God would have us take up.

A call to a higher life; e.g., to the priesthood, to the religious life, to a closer life of union with God (even though not called to practise the Counsels).

HAVING SEEN "THE STAR," WE MUST FOLLOW WHITHERSOEVER IT LEADS—always ultimately to the throne of God.

This is God's object in sending the star.

Love and gratitude should impel us to follow it.

Thus we show ourselves to be true disciples.

To follow the star exactly:

Overcoming natural repugnances.

Constancy.

Great love.

He who sends the star gives the grace to follow it.

We get nearer to God in proportion to our fidelity in following our star.

APPLICATION:

Have we perceived our star?

Are we generously following its guidance?

If not, what hinders us from so doing?

11. THE EPIPHANY STAR

“Behold the star which they had seen in the East went before them until it came and stood over where the Child was. And seeing the star they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And entering into the house, they found the Child with Mary, His Mother.” (Matt. ii. 9–11.)

INTRODUCTION:

Consider the first apparition of the star; its effect on the Magi—wonder, doubts, fear, their determination to follow it. See the caravan traveling through the desert. The star disappears; then the Magi take human means—they inquire. It reappears and guides them to the Child and His Mother.

THE STAR WAS MIRACULOUS, IN PROOF OF WHICH NOTE

Its extreme brilliancy.

It was visible only to the Magi.

It had alternate periods of movement and rest.

It moved in a plane so low as to stand over the dwelling-place of the Holy Family.

THAT STAR WAS GOD'S MESSENGER.

“It gave intelligence to those who saw it.”
(St. Leo.)

Its appearance fulfilled a prophecy: "A star shall rise out of Jacob, and a scepter shall spring up from Israel." (Num. xxiv. 17.)

It guided the Magi on their journey.

It disappeared when human means of obtaining information were at hand.

It re-appeared when human means failed.

IN FOLLOWING THAT MIRACULOUS STAR THE
MAGI MANIFESTED THEIR

Detachment from earthly things.

Earnestness in seeking the Redeemer.

Firm faith in God's messenger.

Confidence in its guidance.

True love of God.

Desire to do His holy will.

APPLICATION:

From this mystery, Christians may learn:

To follow "the star" of faith and duty,
even when it leads through desert paths.

To hold on bravely when spiritual darkness
overwhelms the soul.

To give up all that earth holds dear in
view of our salvation.

To be "stars" ourselves, guiding earth's
wanderers to "the Child and His
Mother."

12. THE PRESENTATION OF JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

“They carried Him to Jerusalem, to present Him to the Lord. As it is written in the law of the Lord . . . and to offer a sacrifice, according as it is written in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”
(Luke ii. 22-24.)

INTRODUCTION:

Watch the Holy Family journeying on the road from Bethlehem to Jerusalem. The Child Jesus, just forty days old, sleeps in Mary's arms. Joseph carries the doves. They go in obedience to the command of God, to present the Child to the Lord.

WE MAY LEARN A LESSON OF SELF-OBLATION

From Jesus:

He offers Himself most gladly.

He sacrifices His reputation, passing as a sinful child of Adam.

He accepts each and every sacrifice that awaits Him—poverty, toil, sufferings of all kinds, even to His bitter passion.

From Mary:

She offers her Jesus.

She sacrificed her reputation (seeing that she was a virgin and sinless).

She accepted the sword of sorrow and the suspense of waiting for it to pierce her soul.

QUALITIES OF THEIR OBLATION: IT WAS GIVEN

Lovingly; hence it was
Generous, no bargaining with God.
Prompt, no delay in giving.
Constant, no looking back with regret.
Joyous, counting it an honor to be allowed
to offer to God something that cost them
suffering.

WHAT DOES GOD ASK US TO OFFER?

Different things at different times, e.g.,
Our will, service, time.
Our feelings and natural inclinations.
Our likes and dislikes.
Our body by physical pain.
Our soul by moral, mental, or spiritual
suffering.

APPLICATION:

Count it all joy when God deigns to ask us
to offer Him something ourselves or to
give up for His sake those dearest to us.

13. HOLY SIMEON

“There was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon; and this man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel. And the Holy Ghost was in him.” (Luke ii. 25.)

INTRODUCTION:

Consider the aged Simeon praying daily—as all good Jews prayed—for the coming of the Messiah. His fervor prevailed and God promised that he should see the Redeemer.

HOW GOD PRAISED SIMEON:

He who ever takes pleasure in the fidelity of His own.

He was just; i.e., he possessed sanctifying grace, a gage of salvation.

He was devout; i.e., God-fearing, assiduous in the service of Jehovah.

He was waiting for the consolation of Israel; i.e., expecting to see Him. Simeon, like Daniel, was “a man of desires,” and such desires come from God.

SIMEON'S REWARD:

It was revealed that before dying he should see the Messiah.

He was inspired to go to the temple (“He came by the Spirit into the temple”) when Joseph and Mary presented the Divine Infant.

The Holy Child was pointed out to him.
He saw likewise Our Blessed Lady, to whom
—in God's name—he foretold part of her
mission.

He was enlightened as to the future of the
Holy Child (“a sign which shall be con-
tradicted”)—His greatness and sorrows
—thus Simeon confirmed the angel's words
to Mary concerning Jesus.

**NOTE SIMEON'S DEVOTION TO THE HOLY
GHOST:**

He was full of the Spirit.

He obeyed the inspirations of the Spirit.

He was detached from the things of earth
and ready to be dismissed in peace.

APPLICATION:

Cultivate holy aspirations.

Be faithful to the guidance of the Holy
Ghost.

14. THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

“Arise, and take the Child and His Mother and fly into Egypt; and be there until I shall tell thee. For . . . Herod will seek the Child to destroy Him. Who arose and took the Child and His Mother by night and retired into Egypt. And he [Joseph] was there until the death of Herod.” (Matt. ii. 13, 14.)

INTRODUCTION:

Contemplate the scene: The Holy Family peacefully sleeping; the apparition of the angel to St. Joseph and the hurried departure by night into Egypt.

THE COMMAND WAS A TRIAL OF FAITH.

Could not God have shielded Jesus from Herod's agents, blinding them “so that they could not find the door” (Gen. xix. 11), even as the angels blinded the Sodomites?

How were they to find sustenance in a heathen land among strangers?

Was not the road dangerous—infested by robbers?

“Until I shall tell thee.” How long would that be?

(But no questions of human prudence prevented their obedience.)

TO WHOM WAS THE COMMAND GIVEN?

To St. Joseph, the lowest of the Holy Family.

Yet Mary obeys promptly, unquestioningly. Jesus' act of submission, "Lo, I come to do Thy will," extends to whatever His Heavenly Father ordains.

The obedience of the Holy Family was constant: they remained in Egypt until bidden by the angel to return.

APPLICATION:

From this mystery we may learn:

To abandon ourselves to God's will.

To support isolation, if God sees fit to impose it.

To accept poverty and privations from God's hand.

That God's ways are not as ours, and are often inexplicable.

As Jesus came with His cross to Mary and Joseph, so He comes to us.

The presence of Jesus lightens sorrow and trials as the Divine Child was the joy of Mary and Joseph during their exile in Egypt.

15. OUR FATHER'S BUSINESS

"Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" (Luke ii. 49.)

INTRODUCTION:

Consider briefly where, by whom, to whom, and on what occasion these words were said. They teach us a sublime lesson; viz., the obligation laid upon us of doing our Father's business before all things.

NOTE THE ENERGY OF OUR LORD'S WORDS:

"I *must* be about My Father's business."

Constantly we find this energetic expression, and each time Jesus says, "I must." He refers to some work for God and the salvation of men; e.g.:

"I must work the works of Him that sent Me, whilst it is day." (John ix. 4.)

"I must preach the kingdom of God, for therefore am I sent." (Luke iv. 43.)

"I must abide in thy house." (Ib. xix. 5.)

"Other sheep I have . . . them also I must bring." (John x. 16.)

"The Son of man must be lifted up." (Ibid. iii. 14.)

"The Son of man must suffer many things." (Mark viii. 31.)

Truly His "meat" was to do the will of the Father and to perfect His works. (John iv. 34.)

WE, TOO, MUST BE ABOUT OUR FATHER'S BUSINESS:

Both as regards our personal sanctification and the salvation of our neighbor.

We must labor continually at our sanctification in spite of

Difficulties and obstacles.

Natural indolence and deceptions.

Weariness and isolation.

Human respect.

Repeated failures.

As regards our neighbor, it is our Father's business that we should

Educate and train our children for God.

Supervise those under our charge.

Give our neighbors a good example.

Minister unto them for Christ's sake.

Bear with their failings.

TO ACCOMPLISH THIS TWOFOLD WORK, WE NEED:

A firm will.

A life of union with Our Lord.

Fervent prayer.

Constant fidelity to the duty of each hour.

APPLICATION:

How far are we about our Father's business?

Do we make it the chief object of our lives?

16. THE SILENCE OF MARY

“His Mother kept all these words in her heart.” (Luke ii. 51.)

INTRODUCTION:

If “the Lord God doth nothing without revealing His secret to His servants the prophets” (Amos iii. 7), can we wonder that He revealed so much to the Mother of Jesus? She knew that it was a good thing “to hide the secret of a king” (Tob. xii. 7), but “honorable to reveal and confess the works of God” (Ibid.); and, in fitting time, Mary knew how to do both.

WORDS THAT MARY KEPT IN HER HEART:

Those of
 The angel Gabriel.
 St. Joseph.
 Holy Simeon.
 The Magi.
 Her Divine Son.

WHY MARY KEPT SILENCE:

Because she was truly
 Loyal—respecting the King’s secret.
 Humble—hence she kept silence as regards the
 Great privileges conferred upon her.
 Glory of her Child.
 Patient—waiting for Jesus to manifest Himself.

Strong—only such souls can be silent concerning joys or sorrows.

WHAT REWARD DID OUR LADY RECEIVE FOR KEEPING SILENCE?

She merited a more abundant communication of the secrets of God, for she was greater than all the prophets to whom He revealed His counsels.

She obtained a deeper insight into their meaning.

UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES DID MARY KEEP SILENCE?

Under the most trying; e.g.:

When her reputation as a virgin was at stake.

(It was God, not Mary, who explained the mystery of the Incarnation to St. Joseph.)

When men treated Jesus with indifference or insult (as in Bethlehem and in the synagogue at Nazareth).

When Jesus hung upon the cross, not one word said by Mary is recorded.

APPLICATION:

We must learn from Mary's example

“To keep the secrets of the king” when duty or prudence counsels it.

“To reveal and confess the works of God” when gratitude bids us reveal them—as Mary praised Him in her Magnificat.

17. JESUS' BOYHOOD

"He went down with them and came to Nazareth and was subject to them." (Luke ii. 51.)

INTRODUCTION:

In this short sentence the years of Jesus' boyhood and youth are summed up: He dwelt at Nazareth and was subject to Mary and Joseph.

JESUS, THE INCARNATE WORD, OBEYS HIS OWN CREATURES; yet,

He possesses infinite wisdom.
 He depends on none.
 He has the most noble will.
 These creatures hold all from Him.
 Their wills are but human.
 Their knowledge is imperfect.

HOW DOES HE OBEY?

In all that they ask of Him as His parents.
 In the performance of menial work.
 With exterior reverence.
 Seeing God in the creature's commands—
 their power over Him is given them "from above."

WHY DOES HE THUS OBEY?

Because
 God has so willed it.

He willed that He be made like unto His brethren in all except sin.

He could thus glorify God upon earth.

He thereby teaches us in what true greatness consists.

He teaches us how to obey.

APPLICATION:

How do we look upon obedience? Do we esteem this virtue?

How do we practise it?

If in command, are we prudent in giving orders?

18. THE HOLY FAMILY IN NAZARETH

"They returned into Galilee, to their city Nazareth. . . . And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age and grace with God and man."
(Luke ii. 39-52.)

INTRODUCTION:

Contemplate the lowly home of the Holy Family. There Jesus passed more than twenty years of His human life. That home was dear to Him, even as our homes are to us.

WHO DWELT UNDER THAT ROOF?

St. Joseph, a just man, one after God's own heart.

Mary, the Immaculate Mother of God.

Jesus, the Son of man and the Word of God.
Never before nor since was such a household gathered together.

CONSIDER THEM IN PRAYER:

Daily they recited the customary Jewish prayers.

They attended the synagogue services on the Sabbath.

They "went every year to Jerusalem, at the solemn day of the Pasch." (Luke ii. 41.)

Jesus ever communed—even as He worked—with His Father.

Mary kept Jesus' words in her heart and pondered over them.

St. Joseph led a life of interior union with his God.

CONSIDER THEIR PROGRESS IN HOLINESS:

Jesus daily manifested His wisdom more and more.

Mary ever rose to higher degrees of perfection, owing to her correspondence with grace.

To Joseph, the "just man," we may apply the words: "The path of the just, as a shining light, goeth forward and increaseth even to perfect day." (Prov. iv. 18.)

SEE THE HOLY FAMILY AT WORK:

St. Joseph, toiling in his workshop.

Our Lady, occupied with household duties.

Jesus, working, studying, rendering service according to His age.

SEE THEM IN THEIR RELATIONS WITH THEIR NEIGHBORS

(Who knew not who dwelt in their midst):

Note the charity of the Holy Family in thought, word, and deed.

Note their patience with human frailty, ignorance, and defects.

Note their readiness to forgive slights or insults.

APPLICATION:

How far do we model our homes upon that of Nazareth?

Do we cultivate respect for authority, mutual forbearance, fraternal charity?

LENTEN SUBJECTS

19. STRENGTH IN WEAKNESS

(Sexagesima Sunday)

"There was given me a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan, to buffet me. For which thing, thrice I besought the Lord that it might depart from me. And He said to me: My grace is sufficient for thee; for power is made perfect in infirmity. . . . when I am weak, then am I powerful." (2 Cor. xii. 7-10.)

INTRODUCTION:

Note the connection between the Epistle and the Gospel for this Sunday. St. Paul's record of how the good seed bore fruit in him, and the Parable of the Sower.

CONTRAST TWO INCIDENTS IN ST. PAUL'S LIFE:

The vision in which he was caught up into Paradise and "heard secret words." (2 Cor. xii. 4.)

Satan's emissary buffeting him.

Thus, in the Christian's life,

 Temptations follow consolations, even as
 for Christ Gethsemani followed Thabor.

ST. PAUL PRAYED AND OUR LORD ANSWERED HIM.

God always hears our prayers.

He gives what we ask or something better.
His assistance does not dispense us from the
conflict—it sustains us, enabling us to
fight on.

He would have us cling firmly to Him.
(Cf. Those saved from a sinking vessel
by the rocket-line or breeches-buoy.)

BY THE GRACE OF GOD WE—LIKE ST. PAUL
—CAN COME TO GLORY IN OUR INFIRM-
ITIES.

Then “the power of Christ” will dwell in us.
Our souls will be good, “very good,” ground,
in which the seeds of all virtues are
Planted by God.
Watered by the Sacraments.
Cultivated by our efforts.
Enabled to bring forth fruit in patience.

APPLICATION:

How do we accept trials and temptations?
Are we courageous or cowardly?
Do we *count* on God’s grace, which never
fails us?
Do we cling to the Blessed Sacrament?

20. ON KEEPING LENT

“With fear and trembling work out your salvation. For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will. And do ye all things without murmurings and hesitations.” (Phil. ii. 12, 14.)

INTRODUCTION:

Picture some miners buried in a mine trying to work out some passage or means of escape. Life is at stake and they are in earnest, working diligently and not counting the cost.

THE INJUNCTION: WORK OUT YOUR SALVATION.

Work is hard, painful, even crucifying.
Each must work out salvation for himself.
Salvation is the one thing that matters—the one thing necessary—which cannot be said of riches, health, success, friends, and all men hold dear.

WORK WITH FEAR, I.E.:

With distrust of self, of our human frailty and inconstancy.

With firm confidence in God and in His grace. Cf. “Trust perfectly in the grace which is offered you.” (1 Pet. i. 13.)

With fear and reverence, because we are co-operating with God, who “worketh” *in* us and *with* us.

Because we need that grace, both "to will and to accomplish" any work profitable unto salvation.

If we fail to work out our salvation, but one alternative remains—eternal death.

Man has but one life in which to work out his salvation—night follows "when no man can work."

WORK WITH TREMBLING; I.E., WITH

Physical discomfort; the body which has cooperated in our past sins must suffer.

These bodies have to be purified, as well as the soul.

We have no *absolute* assurance of salvation until we actually obtain it, though God gives us many gages.

WE MUST WORK WITH GOD, WHO FURNISHES THE MEANS, E.G.:

Our natural gifts and endowments.

Our daily duties to fulfil for Him.

Our trials and sorrows—interior and exterior.

The supernatural helps we need.

APPLICATION:

Lent is a particularly favorable time of salvation.

This Lent may be our last.

We shall have to give an account to God for lost opportunities.

21. "COME APART AND REST A LITTLE"

"Come apart into a desert place and rest a little. For there were many coming and going, and they had not so much as time to eat."
(Mark vi. 31.)

INTRODUCTION :

The apostles had been passing through stirring and busy times—their first mission, with its marvelous experiences; the martyrdom of the Baptist; the preparation for the Pasch; and the arrival of the pilgrim bands. Then Jesus invited them "to rest a little." Thus, too, He invites us during Lent, a mission, or a retreat.

WHY JESUS INVITES US TO "COME APART":

That we may be at leisure to listen to His voice and speak with Him.

Because we need periods of rest from

The cares of life,

The pleasures of life,

The distractions of life—"many coming and going."

The responsibilities of the care of others (to a certain extent).

We need time to take our spiritual food.

HOW CAN WE PROFIT BY OUR LORD'S GRACIOUS INVITATION?

By withdrawing from worldly pleasures.

By simplicity of life—in food, dress, expenditure.

By self-denial in imitation of Jesus.

By acts of charity to the poor for His sake (alms or personal service).

By more prayer, greater interior recollection and concentration on eternal truths.

By great fidelity to the inspirations of the Holy Ghost.

CONSIDER WHAT A PRIVILEGE IT IS TO BE
THUS CALLED APART.

He loves to have His own with Him.

He has something special to say to our souls.

This sojourn apart with Him helps on our sanctification and salvation.

It imparts a holy joy and peace to the soul and helps us to live for heaven.

APPLICATION:

Accept joyously the invitation to rest awhile with Our Saviour.

To "go apart" daily with Him by devout visits to the Blessed Sacrament and frequent communion.

To keep Lent devoutly by extra prayer and abstinence from worldly pleasures.

22. THE FORTY DAYS IN THE DESERT

"There came a voice from heaven: Thou art My Beloved Son . . . And immediately the Spirit drove Him out into the desert."
(Mark i. 11, 12.)

INTRODUCTION:

Note the contrast. God the Father had just honored and glorified Jesus by proclaiming Him publicly as His "Beloved Son," and instantly the Spirit impelled Jesus to retire to the desert. Humiliation follows glorification in this mystery.

JESUS SEEKS SOLITUDE, "THE COUNTRY OF STRONG SOULS."

There, He prepares Himself for the great work which awaited Him; namely, His public life and self-revelation as the Messiah.

His passion and death, to be followed by His glorious resurrection.

IN THE DESERT JESUS PRAYS.

He adores His Heavenly Father.

He accepts unreservedly His holy will.

He intercedes for all the children of men.

He prays "with tears" in these "days of His flesh," and "was heard for His reverence."

(Heb. v. 7.)

IN THE DESERT JESUS SUFFERS PHYSICALLY.

From hunger.
From thirst.
From cold and heat.
From weariness.

IN THE DESERT JESUS SUFFERS MENTALLY
AND MORALLY.

He must have felt the loneliness.
He endured the humiliation of being tempted
by Satan—one of His own creatures.
These temptations were real, and propor-
tioned to the strength of Our Lord as
man, hence far surpassing in violence
those which assail men.

APPLICATION:

By enduring temptation, Our Lord
Became like unto us.
Merited for us the grace to conquer Satan.
Teaches us to use the word of God as a
weapon against Satan.

23. OUR LORD'S TEMPTATION IN
THE DESERT

“Jesus, being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the desert for the space of forty days, and was tempted by the devil.” (Luke iv. 1, 2.)

INTRODUCTION:

Consider Jesus alone in the desert; St. Mark refers to the beasts that prowled around him. Day and night He fasts and prays. Satan dares to approach and tempt the Incarnate Word, though the arch-fiend “hath nothing” in the sinless Son of God and of man.

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS IS FOR US (1) AN ENCOURAGEMENT; (2) A LESSON; (3) A WARNING.

AN ENCOURAGEMENT, SEEING THAT

He was tempted “in all things like as we are.” (Heb. iv. 15.)

He experienced the violence and the attractiveness of the course suggested.

He knows what courage it needs to resist.

He underwent the humiliation of being tempted.

A LESSON, TEACHING US THAT

Temptations are permitted by God—or even sent.

Our Lord's Temptation in the Desert 55

They attack even God's fervent servants.
They are not in themselves sins.
God's angels watch over us during the combat.
We can overcome them by His grace.
By combating them we glorify God.
They are inevitable as long as we are here upon earth.
They merit for us an eternal reward—if resisted.

A WARNING

Not to underrate Satan's power.
Not to run risks, to presume on our own strength.
Not to parley with Satan, but to resist promptly.
That we must
 Count upon God.
 Exercise our will power.
 Realize the utility of temptations.
 Be vigilant.

APPLICATION:

How do we act when tempted?
What means should we take in order to resist bravely?
What special temptations are we subjected to?
Do we run into the occasions of sin?

24. "TEMPTED LIKE AS WE ARE"

"*The prince of this world cometh, and in Me he hath not any thing.*" (John xiv. 30.)

INTRODUCTION:

The life of man is one continual warfare. He is tried by God for a good purpose, by Satan and his agents for an evil one. Hence, Jesus, being made like unto us in all things—sin alone excepted—was tried by God and tempted by the devil. As Jesus had no evil inclinations, He could not be tempted interiorly.

THE DEVIL TEMPTED JESUS.

Satan wanted to win that Soul, which had always resisted his temptations.

He tried various avenues, hoping in the end to succeed; e.g., the three consecutive and different temptations in the desert.

Satan tempted Jesus *directly*.

By direct attacks in the desert.

By specious promises: "All these will I give Thee, if falling down Thou wilt adore me." (Matt. iv. 9.)

In Gethsemani.

During the passion.

Satan tempted Jesus *through human agents*.
Friends

"Manifest Thyself to the world."

"This be far from Thee."

Foes

"Shew us a sign."

"Is it lawful to pay tribute?"

"Come down from the cross."

GOD TRIED HIS BELOVED SON.

Because Jesus had taken the place of the sinner.

Jesus had to be made like unto His brethren, who must endure temptation.

Jesus willed to merit for us the grace to resist temptation.

God desired to teach us how to endure temptation now—men are tried by God, hence Jesus was tried.

HOW JESUS WAS TRIED BY HIS HEAVENLY FATHER:

By the terrible conditions of man's Redemption.

By the long years of waiting.

By the withdrawal of all spiritual consolation—in Gethsemani and on the cross.

APPLICATION:

Count on Our Lord when tempted, for He has promised:

"I will also keep thee from the hour of temptation." (Apoc. iii. 10.) In the thick of the combat "underneath are the everlasting arms" (Deut. xxxiii. 27) of our God.

25. CHRIST'S TEACHING ON SELF-DENIAL

"If any man will follow Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me." (Mark viii. 34.) *"If any man minister to Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there also shall My minister be; . . . him will My Father honor."* (John xii. 26.)

INTRODUCTION:

St. Peter's temerity called forth the first text quoted above. Jesus had predicted His passion and Peter presumed "to rebuke Him." Then Jesus declared that not only He, but all His followers, must carry the cross. The second passage was spoken in the temple in Holy Week. By "minister" we must understand "servant" or "follower."

CONSIDER JESUS' PRECEPT OF SELF-DENIAL:

It involves *active* renunciation, "taking up," "following," etc.; likewise *passive*, bearing the cross laid upon us.

These words were addressed to "the multitude together with His disciples" whom He "called together" that He might teach them. (Mark viii. 34.)

Looking down the vista of the future ages, He saw, too, all who would follow Him in that long procession making for heaven.

All who have been signed with His cross in holy Baptism are pledged to renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh.

WHAT REPLY DOES A GENEROUS SOUL GIVE TO OUR BLESSED LORD'S INVITATION?

That of "a certain scribe, who came and said to Him: Master, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou shalt go." (Matt. viii. 19.)

That of Azarias "in the midst of the furnace": . . . "Now we follow Thee with all our heart, and we fear Thee and seek Thy face." (Dan. iii. 41.)

REFLECTIONS CONCERNING SELF-DENIAL:

God requires our free-will service.

Jesus has placed Himself at the head of the long procession of cross-bearers.

Those who follow Him nearest console Him in His sufferings—their fidelity was foreseen by Him.

Mortification is a very real source of joy, for It frees us from the slavery of sin.

It makes us more like our Master.

It is a way of proving our love.

It increases our merits.

APPLICATION:

Do we carry our cross constantly, generously?

Do we realize how precious the cross is?

26. MORTIFICATION, AN OBLIGATION FOR ALL CHRISTIANS

“Unless you shall do penance, you shall all likewise perish.” (Luke xiii. 3.) *“If any man will follow Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.”* (Mark viii. 34.) *“Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth.”* (Col. iii. 5.) *“They that are Christ’s have crucified their flesh, with the vices and concupiscences.”* (Gal. v. 24.)

INTRODUCTION :

The effect of military discipline on the body: carriage and health—and character. This is the result of enduring hardships, of preparing men to face the enemy when the time comes. Apply this to mortification.

WARNINGS AND INJUNCTIONS :

Our Lord’s words are emphatic.
St. Paul re-echoes His Master’s teaching.
As each penitential season or fast comes round, the Church reminds us of this obligation.

MOTIVES FOR PRACTISING MORTIFICATION :

Only on this condition can we be followers of Christ.
Unless we mortify ourselves we can not keep God’s commandments—we become slaves of sin.

We have to atone for past offences.
Mortification brings fresh graces, which
have their fruition in glory.

WHEN IS MORTIFICATION A DUTY?

When necessary for the avoidance of sin.
In order to obtain some special graces,
prayer *and* fasting are required.

To avoid returning to faults which we formerly committed, of which perhaps we were the slaves.

When imposed by the Church.

PRACTICES OF MORTIFICATION:

Keep the fasts and abstinence imposed by the Church.

Keep our senses under due control: guarding our eyes, ears, tongue, etc.

Curb undue curiosity—lest we learn evil.

Control the imagination by reason, common sense, and faith.

Renounce intellectual pleasures which are dangerous.

Sacrifice our will by obedience. Learn to yield (when no principle of duty is involved) for the sake of peace.

Bear with the imperfections of others, as a penance for our own.

APPLICATION:

Wherein are we most self-indulgent?

What immortification *habitually* weakens our spiritual life?

27. JESUS, OUR EXEMPLAR IN PRAYER

“As He was . . . praying, when He ceased, one of His disciples said to Him: Lord, teach us to pray.” (Luke xi. 1.)

INTRODUCTION:

St. Luke alone—in his “Gospel of Prayer”—records the petition of this disciple. This incident, according to an ancient tradition, took place on the western slope of Mount Olivet. A chapel marks the spot and in the cloisters the Our Father is written in thirty languages. The disciple waited till Jesus had ceased, for the Jews were taught not to interrupt their prayer to salute a king, nor even to remove a serpent that had coiled round the supplicant’s foot.

WHEN DID OUR DIVINE MASTER PRAY?

As soon as His human soul was created.

As a Child.

When He was submitting to be baptized.

In the desert for forty days.

Whole nights upon the mountains; e.g.:

Before choosing the apostles. (Luke vi.)

After feeding the five thousand. (Mark vi.)

Before the Transfiguration. (Luke ix.)

Frequently He prayed in public, e.g.,

On the return of the seventy disciples. (Ibid. x. 21.)

At the grave of Lazarus. (John xi. 41.)

In the temple in Holy Week. (Ibid. xii. 27.)

In the Cenacle. (Ibid. xvii. 1ff.)

In Gethsemani. (Luke xxii. 41-43.)

On the cross.

And thus repeatedly "in the days of His flesh, with a strong cry and tears, offering up prayers and supplications to Him that was able to save Him from death, was heard for His reverence."

JESUS PRAYED THUS BECAUSE AS

Man, He needed strength and illumination.

Man, His soul had need to commune with God.

Redeemer, He prayed for those He came to save, and those who neglect prayer.

Master, He taught His disciples to pray.

HE WOULD HAVE HIS DISCIPLES IMITATE HIS PRAYER, BY THEIR

Fervor.

Reverence.

Assiduity.

Unselfishness, remembering the needs of others.

In due order, putting petitions for God's glory before asking favors for themselves.

APPLICATION:

Frequently beg Him to teach us to pray.

Diligently to learn this "science of the saints."

28. JESUS' STEADFAST PURPOSE

“When the days of His assumption were accomplishing . . . He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem.” (Luke ix. 51.) *“Looking on Jesus, the author and finisher of faith, who, having joy set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and now sitteth on the right hand of the throne of God.”* (Heb. xii. 2.)

INTRODUCTION:

See Jesus leading the little band: “They were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them and they were astonished and following were afraid.” (Mark x. 32.) They were awed by the solemnity of His demeanor, and His quickened pace. Then Jesus, turning and rejoining them, spoke to the Twelve of “the things that should befall Him” and gave clear details concerning His passion, which “Gentiles” were to inflict upon Him.

WHAT MOTIVES UPHELD OUR LORD IN THE
FACE OF HIS PASSION?

Love for the souls of men.

The glory of God.

The joy and reward set before Him as man.

HE STEADFASTLY SET HIS FACE; I. E.,

He deliberately accepted all that He knew must come upon Him.

This steadfast purpose was seen in His carriage, demeanor, and language.

By His strong will power, He held His natural repugnance for suffering in due control.

**WHY ON THIS PARTICULAR OCCASION DID HE
THUS STEADFASTLY RESOLVE TO GO TO
JERUSALEM?**

Because it was His last journey thither; His passion was at hand; He had but six more months to live as man upon earth.

Because He desired to evangelize in the cities through which He passed for the last time.

Because He ardently longed for the hour of His passion; He was "straitened until it was accomplished."

APPLICATION:

We are called to make steadfast resolutions in face of suffering.

We can do so with God's help.

We, too, should suffer, keeping the joy set before us in view; e.g.:

The glory of God.

The salvation of our souls.

The happiness of heaven.

29. ON THE WAY TO JERUSALEM

“They were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them. And they were astonished and following were afraid.”
(Mark x. 32.)

INTRODUCTION:

Contemplate Jesus leading His apostles; astonished and afraid they follow at some little distance. He goes to Jerusalem for the last time.

“THEY WERE IN THE WAY GOING UP TO JERUSALEM.”

They: i.e., Jesus and His apostles. Cf. “Behold, I am with you all days.” (Matt. xxviii. 20.)

Were on their way. Not holding back, keeping close to their Master when He spoke with them.

Going up. The Christian life is an ascension, hence a tiring journey.

To Jerusalem. “The city of peace.”

To the Temple of God.

Our goal, too, is the heavenly Jerusalem, the Temple not made with hands.

“JESUS WENT BEFORE”:

In the ardor of His desire to suffer.

To be an Example inciting us to follow Him.

To keep the Pasch in obedience to the Law.

CONSIDER THE APOSTLES' DISPOSITIONS. They were

Astonished

At Jesus' predictions of His passion.

By their ignorance of God's plan of redemption, which shattered all their false conceptions of a Messianic reign of temporal glory.

Afraid

Fearing danger for themselves.

Fearing danger for their loved Master.

Yet for the time, at least, in spite of "fears within," they followed Jesus.

THEIR REWARD:

They were privileged to share His triumph on Palm Sunday.

They could rejoice later at having been

Witnesses of His sacred passion.

Witnesses to His Resurrection and Ascension.

APPLICATION:

The holy season of Lent and every hour of the Christian's life should find him

With his Divine Lord.

Following closely in His footsteps.

Going up to the heavenly Jerusalem.

30. MINISTERING WOMEN

“He traveled through the cities and towns, preaching and evangelizing the kingdom of God; and the twelve with Him. And certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary, who is called Magdalen . . . and Joanna . . . and Susanna, and many others who ministered to Him of their substance.” (Luke viii. 1-3.)

INTRODUCTION:

Jesus had need of and accepted the services of women. The early Church had her consecrated virgins, widows, and deaconesses—who, like Tabitha, “ministered to the saints”—and her Religious Orders for women. But without leaving their homes for the seclusion of the cloister, all Christian women are privileged to minister to the Lord Jesus in those who represent Him.

SOME WOMEN WHO MINISTERED TO JESUS:

Mary, the Mother of Jesus, the Model of all Christian wives and mothers.

Mary “of Cleophas” (or “of James”), who devoted the years of her widowhood to God and stood by the cross.

Mary Magdalen the penitent, who loved much because she had been forgiven much.

Salome, the mother of James and John. She, too, stood by the cross with Our Lady and St. Mary Magdalen.

Joanna and Susanna, who showed their gratitude for some special deliverance from disease or evil spirits by serving their Saviour. Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward, was a woman of good position, who gave up ease and comforts to follow Jesus.

Martha, the sister of Lazarus, who was ever ready to receive Jesus and welcome Him, together with His apostles, to her roof and table.

These devoted women and "many others" offered to their Lord their *personal services*, *their alms*, *their homes*.

APPLICATION :

We need not envy these ministering women, seeing that, in multiple ways, we can minister to Our Lord:

By faithfully discharging our duties toward those committed to our care by Him.

By helping with good works, according to our power.

Thus we shall merit the praise given to Mary Magdalen: "She hath done what she could."

Thus shall we give Our Lord pleasure and *something to remember*: "For God is not unjust, that He should forget your work and the love which you have shown in His name, you who have ministered and do minister to the saints."

31. THE TRANSFIGURATION

“Jesus taketh with Him Peter and James and John, and leadeth them up into a high mountain apart by themselves, and was transfigured before them.” (Mark ix. 1.) *“And whilst He prayed, the shape of His countenance was altered and His raiment became white and glittering. And behold two men were talking with Him. And they were Moses and Elias, appearing in majesty. And they spoke of His decease that He should accomplish in Jerusalem.”* (Luke ix. 29–31.)

INTRODUCTION:

The traditional scene of the Transfiguration is Mount Thabor. There, on this isolated mountain, three apostles were allowed to see something of the glory of their Master, and heard Moses and Elias bear testimony to the decease of their Master in Jerusalem.

NOTE THE INCIDENTS IN DETAIL:

Jesus praying on the mountain.

His sudden Transfiguration, for a brief moment. He partially raised the veil which concealed His divinity.

The bright light aroused the apostles.

Moses, the Lawgiver; and Elias, the Prophet, confirmed Our Lord's words concerning His decease.

God the Father proclaimed Jesus to be His beloved Son, and bade the apostles hear Him.

EXAMINE THE CONDUCT OF THE THREE APOSTLES:

They slept while He prayed, while the manifestation of His glory was taking place. On awaking, the sight of that glory filled them with fear.

They listened to the conversation, so strange a subject in the midst of such glory!

Peter proposed that they should build three tabernacles and remain there, but "he knew not what he said."

As they lay prostrate on hearing God's voice, Jesus touched them and, looking up, they saw "Jesus only." The glimpse of heaven had faded away from their sight; but never did Peter, James and John forget that they had been eye-witnesses of His majesty when they were with Him "in that holy mount." (2 Pet. i. 18.)

APPLICATION:

God calls all men to hear His beloved Son. The Transfiguration was intended to strengthen the apostles, to prepare them for the awful spectacle of Calvary. Thus joys prepare us to bear sorrows.

We must learn to pray with Jesus.

In prayer, men are transfigured in a certain sense; they become more Christ-like.

It is good to learn to see "Jesus only" in all the events of our daily life, to see the Creator in the creatures.

32. PREDICTIONS OF THE PASSION—I

“*He began to teach them that the Son of man must suffer many things.*” (Mark viii. 31.)

INTRODUCTION:

Such teaching ran counter to all their falsely preconceived idea of a Messiah who should crush the enemies of Israel, set them free, and inaugurate a glorious reign upon earth.

HOW DID JESUS REVEAL HIS PASSION? AT FIRST, *obscurely*, THEN *clearly*.

Obscure allusions:

St. John the Baptist revealed Jesus as the Lamb of God taking away the sin of the world. (John i. 29.)

At the first Pasch of His public life, Jesus said to the Jews: “Destroy this temple; and in three days I will raise it up.” (Ibid. ii. 19.)

He said to Nicodemus: “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of man be lifted up.” (Ib. iii. 14.)

At the banquet in Levi’s house, Jesus said: “The days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away.”

At Capharnaum, He spoke of “the bread” that was to be given “for the life of the world”; i.e., His sacred flesh. (John vi. 52.)

Clear predictions:

After St. Peter’s confession of faith:

“He began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be killed, and after three days rise again.”

As He came down from the Mountain of the Transfiguration, He said: “Tell the vision to no man till the Son of man shall be risen from the dead.” (Matt. xvii. 9.)

When journeying secretly through Galilee: “The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men, and they shall kill Him . . . and He shall rise again the third day.” (Mark ix. 30.)

On His last journey to Jerusalem, He speaks even more openly: “We go up to Jerusalem and the Son of man shall be betrayed to the chief priests . . . scribes and ancients . . . they shall condemn Him to death . . . and deliver Him to the Gentiles, and they shall mock Him, spit on Him, scourge Him, and crucify Him, and the third day He shall rise again.” (Matt. xx; Mark x; Luke xviii.)

APPLICATION:

Learn something of the tenderness of Jesus, who thus so gently prepared His disciples for the awful tragedy of Calvary.

Learn how He loved man, not only dying for him but bearing the prolonged agony of waiting for His passion to be accomplished.

33. PREDICTIONS OF THE PASSION—II

The apostles "understood not the word; and they were afraid to ask Him." (Mark ix. 31.)

EFFECT OF THESE PREDICTIONS ON THE DISCIPLES:

From the four Evangelists' records, we learn that

The disciples were sorely *perplexed*.

"This word was hidden from them."

They feared to question Jesus—feared for Him—feared for themselves.

They were sorrowful: "Because I have spoken these things to you, sorrow hath filled your heart." (John xvi. 6.)

SOME PROOFS OF THEIR INABILITY TO GRASP OUR LORD'S MEANING:

St. Peter's rebuking Our Lord and trying to dissuade Him from suffering.

Their "questioning together what that should mean, when He shall be risen from the dead." (Mark ix. 9.)

Their lack of faith in Jesus' Resurrection.

Their question on Ascension Day: "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts i. 6.)

WHY WERE THE APOSTLES SO DULL OF COMPREHENSION?

Because the doctrine of the passion was so totally opposed to

Their interpretation of the Old Testament predictions.

The teaching of the Jewish rabbis, who set forth a Messiah who should be immortal and reign gloriously.

Their own desires for a temporal Messianic kingdom and places of honor therein.

Their natural abhorrence for suffering and humiliations.

Finally, they loved their Master and dreaded being separated from Him.

Probably they were too excited, by the events of the few months which preceded the passion, to listen calmly to their Master's words.

They evidently understood Our Lord's words as an obscure prophecy, to be interpreted metaphorically.

APPLICATION:

From the disciples' conduct we may learn that a special grace is needed to enable us to accept that which is

Repugnant to human nature.

Opposed to our natural inclinations.

Contrary to what we have looked forward to with expectation.

Yet Our Lord gives that grace if we pray for it. The apostles, after the descent of the Holy Ghost, understood the necessity of suffering and gloried in their tribulations for His Name's sake.

We must imitate them by accepting humiliations.

34. JESUS OF NAZARETH WAS
PASSING BY

“A certain blind man sat by the wayside, begging. And when he heard the multitude passing by, he asked what this meant. And they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by.” (Luke xviii. 35–37.)

INTRODUCTION:

Consider this incident as recorded by the Gospels. See Jesus on the road from Ephrem to Jericho. He descends into the plain of Jericho with His disciples. The two cities of Jericho—the ancient and the modern—stand opposite each other. St. Matthew speaks of *two* blind beggars sitting by the wayside. St. Mark and St. Luke only mention one, Bartimeus, probably the better known.

JESUS' CONDESCENSION AND MERCY:

He inspired those beggars with faith in His power.

He halted and called the blind to Him.

He healed them.

CONDUCT OF THE BYSTANDERS:

At first they bade the men keep silence.

Then they encouraged them: “Arise, He calleth thee.”

They conducted them to Jesus.

CONDUCT OF THE BLIND MEN :

They realized their sad condition and desired to be healed.

They cried out earnestly, perseveringly.

When rebuked "they cried the more."

They obeyed Jesus' command instantly.

Then He rewarded their faith by restoring their sight.

They followed Jesus on the road to Jerusalem, "glorifying God."

APPLICATION :

Applying this incident to our own spiritual blindness we may learn

To cry out earnestly for spiritual illumination.

To recognize the footsteps of Jesus, who is ever passing by, that He may lead His own onward and heavenward.

To follow Him generously, constantly, not heeding those who would keep us from Him.

Never to hinder others from following Jesus.

To lead them rather to His feet.

To glorify God for all the graces He has given us and to render Him thanks in His house of prayer.

To have confidence in the power and mercy of our loving Saviour.

35. JESUS' "HOUR"

"Jesus, knowing that His hour was come, that He should pass out of this world to the Father: having loved His own, He loved them unto the end." (John xiii. 1.)

INTRODUCTION:

"All things have their season; and in their times all things pass under heaven. A time to be born and a time to die." (Eccles. iii. 1, 2.) Jesus, from the moment of His Incarnation, looked forward to that "time to die," which He called "His hour."

JESUS OFTEN SPOKE OF THAT HOUR; E.G.:

To the woman of Samaria: "The hour cometh and now is, when the true adorers shall adore the Father in spirit and in truth." (John iv. 23.)

To His apostles He spoke of "the hour" when He should be betrayed. (Mark ix. 30.)

He announced that His hour had come (John xii. 23; xvii. 1), for which He had waited.

He prayed in Gethsemani that it might pass from Him.

THE PROPHETS FORESAW THAT HOUR:

When the Lamb should be led to the slaughter.

When the Messiah should tread the winepress.

When men should look on Him whom they had pierced.

CONSIDER FURTHER THAT:

Mary's "hour" of suffering coincided with that of her Son.

Then the sword pierced her soul.

JESUS AWAITED HIS HOUR:

With desire: "I have a baptism, etc."
(Luke xii. 50.)

With fear: "Father, save Me from this hour."
(John xii. 27.)

With generosity: "Arise, let us go hence."
(Ibid. xiv. 31.)

With love for His disciples—loving them "unto the end," i.e., to excess. (Ibid. xiii. 1.)

With confidence: "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit."
(Luke xxiii. 46.)

MEN HAVE THEIR HOURS, EACH APPOINTED BY GOD:

For the wicked, an hour of retribution.

For the just, an hour of recompense.

Likewise the Christian has in this world his hour—of temptation—of labor—of trial—of death.

APPLICATION:

Accept each hour as God appoints it, trusting in His help.

Strive to accept trials bravely, "looking on Jesus."

36. "JESUS HID HIMSELF"

"They took up stones therefore to cast at Him. But Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple." (John viii. 59.)

INTRODUCTION:

This scene took place in the temple cloisters. Jesus had declared that before Abraham existed, He was. The Jews, rejecting His testimony, considered His words as a blasphemy and prepared to stone Him. But His hour was not yet come; therefore He withdrew and thus frustrated their design.

CONSIDER HOW JESUS HID HIS DIVINITY DURING HIS LIFE UPON EARTH:

In the crib, men saw but an infant.
 During the thirty years of His hidden life,
 He passed as "the son of Joseph."
 In the desert, praying and fasting, enduring
 temptation. How unlike what we
 should have expected of the Son of God!
 In Gethsemani, when He sweat blood.
 During the ignominies of His passion; e.g.,
 The flagellation, the crowning with thorns,
 The scene of the "Ecce Homo," on the
 cross.
 In the tomb, scarred with the torments of
 His passion.
 Truly He was "a hidden God!"

**JESUS CONCEALS HIMSELF NOW FROM US.
HE OFTEN HIDES HIMSELF AS DURING
HIS MORTAL LIFE.**

In the events of His providence.

In the poor, sick, and afflicted, who claim our
alms in His name.

In the Holy Eucharist.

In the person of those who rule us by His
authority—the superiors placed over us.

When the soul commits a mortal sin. Then
Jesus hides Himself and leaves the soul
that can no longer serve as His temple.

In spiritual desolation.

**HE WILL CEASE TO HIDE HIMSELF IN
HEAVEN.**

There we shall see Him “face to face,” “as
He is.”

APPLICATION:

Seek Him where He is to be found.

Ask for grace to pierce the veils that conceal
Him.

Live ever in His presence and in such a way
as to retain Him with us.

Frequently visit the Blessed Sacrament, in
which both His humanity and divinity are
concealed.

37. JESUS WASHES HIS APOSTLES' FEET

"He putteth water into a basin and began to wash the feet of the disciples." (John xiii. 5.)

INTRODUCTION:

Contemplate the scene in that "Upper Room." Jesus is reclining at the supper-table with His disciples. Presently He rises from His place and prepares to render them a menial service. They look at Him, awe-struck and astonished.

THE SOLEMN PREPARATION FOR THIS ACT OF HUMILITY.

"Knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands." "That He came from God and goeth to God."

And this is the prelude, not to some mighty miracle of raising the dead, but to an act of humility. He who took on Himself the form of a servant did not disdain to do a servant's work.

CONSIDER JESUS KNEELING IN TURN AT THE FEET OF HIS APOSTLES.

He reads their inmost thoughts:

He sees in Peter, faith and love mingled with presumption.

He sees in John, love, purity, zeal, courage, and a certain ambition.

He sees in Thomas, good will, devotedness, yet his faith is weak.

He sees in Matthew, generosity in giving up his wealth.

He sees in Andrew, love of the cross and zeal for souls.

He sees in Judas, avarice, deceit, jealousy.

In all, except the traitor, He sees future witnesses to Him even to the shedding of blood. All were dear to Him. He loved even Judas, as He loves all sinners, with a yearning love of compassion.

DISCOURSE OF JESUS AFTER WASHING THEIR FEET, IN WHICH HE TEACHES US THAT

Eternity reveals all things: "What I do thou knowest not now, thou shalt know hereafter."

It is necessary that He should cleanse us from lesser as from greater faults. (Every absolution is the fruit of His precious blood.)

He wills that we should perform lowly exercises of charity for our neighbor and this for His sake.

We do well when we call Him Lord and Master; we do better when we render Him the homage of imitation.

APPLICATION:

Are we ready to humble ourselves before men for Christ's sake?

Do we minister to our neighbor as unto Him?

38. CONFIDENCE IN GOD

“Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in Me.” (John xiv. 1.)

INTRODUCTION :

Strangely these words must have fallen upon the ears of the apostles under the circumstances in which they were uttered in the Cenacle on Maundy Thursday.

ALL SEEMED TO COMBINE TO PRODUCE
TROUBLE AND SORROW.

The prediction of Judas' treachery.

The prediction of Peter's denial.

The prediction of the apostles' flight.

The prediction of Jesus' leaving His apostles.

The prediction of His passion so close at hand.

STILL JESUS EXHORTED HIS APOSTLES TO
CONFIDENCE.

Weigh each word of His exhortation:

Let not; i.e.:

Do not *allow* yourselves to be troubled.

Exercise will power.

Think of the motives of encouragement; e.g., His Resurrection, the hope of seeing Him again; the promise that their joy should “be full.”

Your heart; i.e.:

Your inmost soul with its

Memory—calling to mind His words.

Understanding—penetrating by faith and hope the designs of God's providence.

Will—bending it to run parallel with God's will; repressing fear, which is "a yielding up of the succors from thought"; i.e., which paralyzes the intelligence and power of acting.

MOTIVES OF CONFIDENCE.

Belief in God's

Love

Omniscience

Omnipotence

Wisdom

Justice.

Faith in Christ's

Love of His sheep.

Fidelity to His promises.

The "many mansions" awaiting us.

The necessity of entering into life through the portals of death.

APPLICATION:

"Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." (John vi. 69.)

"Although He should kill me, I will trust in Him." (Job xiii. 15.)

39. "LEANING ON JESUS' BOSOM"

"There was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved." (John xiii. 23.)

INTRODUCTION:

Picture the scene as portrayed by this disciple—the supper table, our Divine Master in the place of honor, St. John reclining to the left of Our Lord, so that he could lean back on Jesus' bosom.

JESUS WAS TRUE MAN, CONSEQUENTLY HE HAD PREFERENCES AND GAVE TOKENS OF HIS FRIENDSHIP.

He had a special love

For St. John, "the beloved disciple."

For St. Mary Magdalen, Martha, and their brother, Lazarus.

For St. Peter, who, on professing his love for his Master, was appointed to shepherd the flock of Christ.

For Mary, His Mother.

For little children.

For the sick, suffering, and sorrowful.

He gave tokens of His friendship:

St. John leaned on His bosom.

Mary Magdalen knelt at His feet.

His Blessed Mother was privileged to stand by His cross.

He took little children up in His arms and blessed them.

He gave special favors to Peter, James, and John.

WHAT ESPECIALLY ATTRACTED JESUS' LOVE AND SYMPATHY FOR ST. JOHN?

St. John's purity of soul.

His zeal and loyalty ("son of thunder").

His love of Mary, whom Jesus confided to his care.

WHAT ST. JOHN LEARNED AS HE LEANED ON HIS MASTER'S BOSOM:

To realize Jesus' love for him and for all men.

To love Him "in deed and in truth," and hence: to follow him; to stand by the cross; to die for Him ("martyr in will").

To be the apostle of love.

APPLICATION:

We can share St. John's privilege

By contrition: The father of the prodigal son "fell upon his neck" and embraced him. (Luke xv. 20.)

By purity of soul: "His right hand shall embrace me." (Cant. ii. 6.)

By simplicity: "He shall gather together the lambs with His arm." (Is. xl. 11.)

By confidence: "Underneath are the everlasting arms." (Deut. xxxiii. 27.)

By prayer and holy communion: "We will come to him and will make Our abode with him." (John xiv. 23.)

40. THE FRIENDSHIP OF CHRIST

"I have called you friends; because all things, whatsoever I have heard of My Father, I have made known to you." "Stay you here and watch with Me." (John xv. 15; Matt. xxvi. 38.)

INTRODUCTION:

Since Christ our Master was perfect man, like us He longed for human friendship and all it connotes—human love, sympathy, devotedness, mutual interchange of words and deeds of service.

WORDS OF JESUS, PROVING HIS DESIRE FOR HIS CREATURES' FRIENDSHIP:

"Where there are two or three gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matt. xviii. 20.)

"Come to Me, all you that labor and are burdened." (Ibid. xi. 28.)

"Abide in My love." (John xv. 9.)

Services rendered to the least of His little ones, He takes as done unto Himself. (Matt. xxv. 40.)

"I am with you all days." (Ib. xxviii. 20.)

He prayed that His disciples might always be with Him. (John xvii. 24.)

DEEDS PROVING HIS TRUE FRIENDSHIP:

He went to His apostles' assistance in their needs.

On the Lake, the tribute money, the healing of St. Peter's mother-in-law, etc.

He taught His apostles to pray in His name.
He sought their company in His joys and sorrows (Thabor, Gethsemani).

He wept over Jerusalem, His beloved city;
over Lazarus, His "friend," and rejoiced in raising him from the dead.

He knew how to forgive and forget the conduct of His apostles during His passion.

He rewarded St. John's fidelity on Calvary.
He established the Church to enlist and retain men in His friendship.

He ever offers Himself for mankind in the holy sacrifice of the Mass.

He is preparing a place for His own in heaven and will come again and take them unto Himself.

Above all, He laid down His life for His friends and foes.

APPLICATION:

Our duties to Jesus, "our Friend":

To learn to know Him more intimately.

To treat Him with loving, reverent familiarity (as the saints were wont to do).

To further His interests—at our own cost, if needs be.

To give ourselves wholly to Him whose love exceeds all human affection.

"I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore have I drawn thee, taking pity on thee." (Jer. xxxi. 3.)

41. JESUS' PRAYER IN GETHSEMANI

“He saith to them: My soul is sorrowful even unto death. Stay you here and watch with Me. And going a little further, He fell upon His face, praying and saying: My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt. . . . And He prayed the third time, saying the selfsame word.” (Matt. xxvi. 38-44.)

INTRODUCTION :

According to a Hebrew idiom, “cup” or “chalice” is used figuratively for sorrows or joys sent by God; e.g.: “Thou [i.e., Jerusalem] hast drunk at the hand of the Lord the cup of His wrath . . . thou hast drunk even to the dregs.” (Is. li. 17.) “My chalice which inebriateth me, how goodly is it!” (Ps. xxii. 5.)

JESUS, AS MAN, EXPERIENCED THE GREATEST OPPOSITION OF HIS ALL-PERFECT AND FREE WILL WHEN THE BITTER POTION OF HIS PASSION WAS PRESENTED TO HIM.

The ingredients of this potion were numerous; e.g.: It cost Our Lord tremendous violence to His human will to accept

The indignity of being tempted by Satan in Gethsemani; of the rejection of His own people; of the cowardice and ingratitude of His disciples; of standing as a criminal before a human tribunal.

The awful torments of His passion—and
He foresaw every detail of it.
The insults offered to His reputation by
the terrible indignities awaiting Him.
The humiliation of taking our sins upon
Him, of being our Sin-Bearer.

**HE NEEDED STRENGTH TO OVERCOME THIS
NATURAL REPUGNANCE.**

He wrestled with Satan, who perhaps represented to Him the inutility of His sufferings for so many.
He "prayed the more" as the repugnance increased.

GOD SENT AN ANGEL TO STRENGTHEN HIM.

Perhaps by showing Him the glorious fruits of His passion.

Then, Jesus, thus strengthened,
Went forward to meet His executioners.
Submitted to the kiss of Judas.
Suffered His apostles to depart, and forbade the soldiers to arrest them.
Submitted to be bound and led into Jerusalem.
Accepted every detail of the passion.

APPLICATION:

The Christian must overcome natural repugnance to suffering by continued earnest prayer. This opposition of the will, *if combated*, increases his merits. He, like St. Paul, "can do all things, through Christ," who strengthens him.

42. LESSONS FROM GETHSEMANI

“He went, according to His custom, to the Mount of Olives . . . and, kneeling down, He prayed, saying: Father, if Thou wilt, remove this chalice from Me, but yet not My will, but Thine be done. And there appeared to Him an angel from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in an agony, He prayed the longer. And His sweat became as drops of blood trickling down upon the ground.” (Luke xxii. 39-44.)

INTRODUCTION:

Jesus goes to the Garden of Gethsemani; leaving eight apostles at the entrance, He takes with Him Peter, James, and John to be witnesses of His humiliation and interior passion.

IN GETHSEMANI, JESUS DESIRED THE COMPANIONSHIP OF HIS APOSTLES.

Because as man, He needed sympathy.

He wished them to see what a price He was paying for man's redemption.

He willed to give them a signal proof of His love.

He desired to have them near Him, that when He was arrested Himself, He might protect them from His foes.

FROM OUR LORD'S AGONY WE MAY LEARN
MANY PRECIOUS LESSONS.

To detest sin, which caused Him to be "sorrowful unto death," "to fear," and "to be heavy," weighed down under the burden of iniquities.

Reverence in prayer: "He was heard for His reverence." "He fell flat upon the ground," "upon His face."

Resignation to God's will and natural repugnance for suffering can co-exist in the soul.

God strengthens the souls that persevere in prayer; He sends His angels to assist them.

In suffering, we should prolong our prayer—like our Divine Master, pray "the longer."

It is lawful to desire human sympathy while willing to sacrifice it, if God so appoints.

APPLICATION:

When in sorrow, offer our prayers in union with Jesus in Gethsemani, where He sanctified the prayers of all who are afflicted.

In spiritual desolation, we must be prepared to "pray the longer."

In the midst of the conflict with strong temptations think of Jesus in Gethsemani: We "have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin."

43. THE SUBMISSION OF JESUS

*“He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter,
and shall be dumb as a lamb before his shearer.”*
(Is. liii. 7.)

INTRODUCTION:

Jesus, in His sacred passion, has given us an example of all virtues. In the text cited above, the prophet predicted the submission of Jesus to all that was appointed for Him to endure.

CONSIDER HOW JESUS WAS LED AS A SHEEP
TO THE SLAUGHTER BY HIS ENEMIES:

“They . . . laid hands on Jesus and held Him” in Gethsemani. (Matt. xxvi. 50.)

“They led Him away to Annas first.”
(John xviii. 13.)

“Annas sent Him bound to Caiphas.”
(Ibid. 24.)

“Binding Jesus, they led Him away and delivered Him to Pilate.” (Mark xv. 1.)

Pilate “sent Him to Herod.” (Luke xxiii. 7.)

Herod “sent Him back to Pilate.” (Ibid. 11.)

“The soldiers led Him away into the court of the palace” (Mark xv. 16), where they mocked at His royalty.

Pilate said “I bring Him forth unto you. . . . Behold the Man!” (John xix. 5.)

Then "they led Him out to crucify Him."
(Mark xv. 20.)

FROM JESUS' SUBMISSION, THE CHRISTIAN
SHOULD LEARN SOME PRECIOUS LESSONS:

To resign himself wholly to God.

Cf. "Take all that shall be brought
upon thee; and in thy sorrow endure,
and in thy humiliation keep patience."
(Ecclus. ii. 4.)

Prudence even counsels this, seeing that man
can not guide himself aright, since he is
Blinded by passion.

Ignorant of the way.

Harassed by enemies.

Weak and inconstant.

God leads each soul—often whither it would
not naturally wish to go—even as He
led St. Peter.

As the submission of Christ to His passion
was rewarded by the glory of His Res-
urrection, so the patient submission of
the soul will be rewarded in heaven.

APPLICATION:

We owe to God as our Leader and Master

Absolute submission.

Loving confidence.

Sincere gratitude.

44. FIAT!

“*Fiat!*”—meaning, “*Let it be done.*”¹

INTRODUCTION:

Three times (*inter alia*), we find this word in the Scriptures and each time dealing with tremendous issues.

GOD’S “FIAT” AT THE CREATION OF THE WORLD.

Before that “Fiat” all was in chaos and darkness.

God’s word produced *order, beauty, life, light.*

God’s “Fiat” re-echoes down the ages, “upholding all things by the word of His power.”

CONSIDER MARY’S “FIAT”—“BE IT DONE UNTO ME ACCORDING TO THY WORD.”

It was the “Fiat” of a sinless creature.

Consider the *circumstances.*

The world’s sin and misery.

The need of a Saviour.

The earnest yearning of the just for the Messiah.

Consider the *effects.*

“The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.”

Man was potentially redeemed since Mary gave Jesus “power to die.”²

¹ Present subjunctive of “*feri*”—“to become.”

² Father Tabb’s poem.

THE "FIAT" OF THE SON OF GOD.

Circumstances:

Uttered before the creation of the world:

"Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God."

In Gethsemani as He began His passion.

Effects:

Man's redemption was thereby accomplished.

Heaven was opened to all believers.

God's glory was procured.

APPLICATION:

The sinful creature can likewise pronounce its "Fiat"—above all, the devout and faithful Christian, seeing that

Jesus and Mary have given us an example.

It is necessary that we should say it both for our sanctification and salvation.

Though it is difficult to accept God's will when it brings us suffering, still we can do so by God's grace.

Thus holy Job in his sore afflictions said:

"The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. . . . Blessed be the name of the Lord. In all these things Job sinned not by his lips; nor spake he any foolish thing against God." (Job i. 21, 22.)

45. JESUS' LAMENT OVER JERUSALEM

“When He drew near, seeing the city, He wept over it, saying: If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace; but now they are hidden from thy eyes.” (Luke xix. 41, 42.)

INTRODUCTION:

Contemplate the scene, the brow of the hill, whence there was a glorious view of the city. See the procession. Listen to the “Hosannas” of the multitude. Contemplate Jesus weeping as He looks upon the doomed city.

HE DREW NEAR JERUSALEM—“THE CITY OF PEACE.”

As He did so, in prophetic vision He saw Jerusalem leveled to the ground and Mount Olivet covered with the crosses of crucified Jews.

He knew that for many of His people His passion would be of no avail (e.g., for Judas).

He foresaw the sufferings of His own disciples.

He knew what fearful guilt the Jewish nation were incurring by putting Him to death.

HENCE JESUS WEPT “ALOUND,”

As He wept at the grave of Lazarus.

As St. Mary Magdalen wept at His feet.
As the widow of Naim wept for her son.

THE JEWS KNEW NOT THE TIME OF THEIR VISITATION.

Their ignorance was wilful. They would not accept Jesus as the Messias. Therefore the things that were for their peace were hidden from their eyes.

THOUSANDS IN OUR DAY KNOW NOT THE DAY OF THEIR VISITATION.

Thus, sinners reject Christ.
Many Catholics do not follow Him wholeheartedly.
Some refuse to follow Him in the path of the counsels.
Often Christians fail to realize that trials are a blessed visitation fraught with countless blessings, for those who accept them from God and bear them generously.

APPLICATION:

Profit by the occasions which God offers us for working out our salvation.
Pray that we may realize fully His designs for our sanctification and correspond to the graces bestowed upon us.

46. THE SUFFERINGS OF JESUS

“O all ye that pass by the way, attend, and see if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow.” (Lam. i. 12.) *“A man of sorrows and acquainted with infirmity.”* (Is. liii. 3.)

INTRODUCTION:

The sacred passion is the dominant thought of Lent. It should be the devotion dear to all Christians. It is a devotion which brings many graces and one which characterizes God's saints. In heaven it furnishes the theme of the hymns of praise of the blessed.

WHO SUFFERS?

The Lamb of God, the Sinless One.
 Jesus, our Surety.
 Our God; i.e., the Word Incarnate.

WHAT DOES “THE MAN OF SORROWS” SUFFER?

In His body.

Poverty, hunger, thirst, heat and cold, weariness, pain in every limb and sense, agony and death in torments.

In His soul.

Man's sin overwhelming His holy soul; temptations of Satan, spiritual desolation, heaviness and fear, apprehension of His passion.

In His affections.

Indifference, denial, betrayal, desertion, ingratitude, hatred, and rejection.

In His mission.

Contradiction of sinners, persecution, opposition, rejection of His Messianic claims.

In His honor.

Mockery, derision, calumnies, unbelief.

WITH WHAT DISPOSITIONS DOES HE SUFFER?

With love, generosity, and constancy.

With humility. Saints have suffered—upborne by grace—with ecstatic joy. Jesus suffered as man, falling even beneath His cross and accepting Simon's help.

WHY DOES HE SUFFER THUS?

To merit for us a plentiful redemption.

To procure the glory of God, of which man's sin had robbed Him.

To give us an example that we should follow in His steps. (1 Pet. ii. 21.)

To compel us to love Him in return.

APPLICATION:

“The servant is not greater than his lord.”
(John xiii. 16.)

“Let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.” (Mark viii. 34.)

“If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him.”
(2 Tim. ii. 12.)

47. JESUS, OUR SURETY

“Forget not the kindness of thy Surety, for He hath given His life for thee.” (Ecclus. xxix. 19.)

INTRODUCTION :

We can apply these words of the Wise Man to Jesus, our Surety, who hath given His life for us.

MAN PROVERBIALY HAS A BAD MEMORY AS REGARDS SPIRITUAL OBLIGATIONS; E.G.,

He forgets his bounden duty to his Creator and thus neither worships God nor gives Him thanks.

He forgets his promises to God.

He forgets to atone for his sins.

He forgets the very existence of his immortal soul.

He forgets his own truest and highest interest in not receiving his spiritual food.

He forgets that earth is but a passage in his existence, not a finality.

TO MAN, SO FORGETFUL OF HIS DUTIES, JESUS HAS SHOWN KINDNESS.

As proofs of this, we have

His Incarnation “for us men and for our salvation.”

His hidden life of humility and toil.

His public life of mercy.

His mental sufferings and interior passion.

His bodily sufferings.

His constant care for His children.

His long abode in the silence and loneliness of the tabernacle.

His willingness to absolve the penitent.

His loving invitations to the children of men.

JESUS, OUR SURETY, GAVE HIS LIFE. HE DID NOT MERELY RISK IT FOR MEN.

He answered for us as Juda for Benjamin:

“I take the boy upon me; require him at my hand.” (Gen. xliii. 9.)

“He was made sin for us.” Like the scape-goat, He was laden with our iniquities, but, as He tells us, “I lay down My life, no man taketh it from Me.”

WE REMEMBER THE KINDNESS OF OUR SURETY.

By profiting by His redemption.

By meditating on His passion.

By returning Him love for love.

By “com-passion,” i.e., suffering in union with Him, whatever He shall please to lay upon us in body or soul.

By voluntary acts of self-denial.

APPLICATION:

Think of our Surety when tempted by the devil.

48. "WITH JESUS OF NAZARETH"

"Thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth."
 (Mark xiv. 67.) *"Even thy speech doth discover thee."* (Matt. xxvi. 73.) *The rulers knew "that they [Peter and John] had been with Jesus."* (Acts iv. 13.)

INTRODUCTION:

Contemplate the scene: St. Peter in the courtyard in the midst of Jesus' enemies. They knew him by his Galilean accent;¹ they had seen him in Gethsemani. In like manner, the high priest Annas, and those with him, remembered having seen the apostles with Jesus.

EVERY TRUE CHRISTIAN HAS BEEN AND IS
"WITH JESUS OF NAZARETH"

By sanctifying grace.

By prayer.

By holy communion.

By resignation to the will of God.

By patience and constancy in suffering—voluntary or imposed by God.

THEIR SPEECH "DISCOVERS" THEM.

To the good, they are "an odor of life unto life."

¹ The Galileans could not pronounce the guttural sounds correctly.

To the bad, they are "an odor of death unto death" since we manifest "the knowledge of Christ." (See 2 Cor. ii. 14-16.)

Their mouths "speak of the abundance of the heart," and reveal it to be a "good heart."

THEIR CONDUCT REVEALS THAT THEY HAVE BEEN WITH JESUS.

It was on seeing the "constancy" of Peter and John that the high priest remembered having seen them with Jesus.

St. Paul declares that the life of Jesus should be "made manifest in our mortal flesh," and this by "always bearing about in our body the mortification of Jesus." (2 Cor. iv. 10.) Again, he writes: "I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me." (Gal. ii. 20.)

APPLICATION:

Does our daily life reveal that we, too, have been with Jesus of Nazareth?

Does our speech betray us, and in which sense?

49. THE SENTIMENTS OF JESUS
DURING HIS PASSION

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. . . . He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross.” (Philipp. ii. 5, 8.)

INTRODUCTION:

Each year as Passiontide comes round, we should endeavor to penetrate more deeply into Our Lord’s sentiments by studying more earnestly His interior dispositions.

HIS SENTIMENTS AS REGARDS HUMILITY:

By the Incarnation

“He emptied Himself, He took the form of a servant and was found in the habit of man,” and this that, when the appointed time came, He might suffer the agonies of His bitter passion.

In His sacred passion

He took our iniquities upon Him.

He let the flood-tide of sin roll in upon His soul.

He allowed Himself to be

Betrayed, denied, and deserted by His own.

Rejected in favor of Barabbas.

Mocked, scourged, crowned with thorns.

Dragged as a criminal to Calvary.

Nailed to the cross upon which He died.

Buried in a tomb, like an ordinary man
(instead of rising gloriously instantly
after His death).

HIS SENTIMENTS AS REGARDS CHARITY:

He defended His apostles.

He loved them to the end—giving His life's
blood for their ransom.

He excused His executioners and prayed
for them.

He worked a miracle in favor of Malchus.

For love of men's souls, He drank the chalice
of calumny, insult, and humiliation to the
very dregs. The prophet saw Him as "a
worm and no man."

He forgave all who persecuted Him and
compassed His death.

His love and confidence in His Heavenly
Father were not shaken by His passion.

APPLICATION:

"Let this mind be in you, which was in Christ
Jesus."

Learn from His example to practise humil-
ity and charity.

50. "DESPISED AND REJECTED"

"Despised and the most abject of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with infirmity; and His look was as it were hidden and despised. Whereupon we esteemed Him not." (Is. liii. 3.)

INTRODUCTION:

Isaias saw Christ Our Lord as "the Man of Sorrows." David had predicted the rejection of Jesus as the "Cornerstone."

JESUS WAS REJECTED DURING HIS HIDDEN LIFE.

In Bethlehem "His own received Him not." Simeon predicted that He should be a sign of contradiction.

Herod sought to kill the Holy Child.

In Nazareth, He was reputed simply as "the carpenter's son." "Neither did His brethren believe in Him."

JESUS WAS REJECTED DURING HIS PUBLIC LIFE.

Nathanael asked: "Can any thing of good come from Nazareth?" (John i. 46.)

Jesus complained: "You will not come to Me," etc. (John v. 40.)

The leaders of Israel said of Him that "He ate with publicans and sinners." (Mark ii. 16.)

"He hath a devil and is mad. Why hear you Him?" (John x. 20.)

The people of Nazareth "rose up and thrust Him out of the city; and they brought Him to the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast Him down headlong."

The Samaritans "received Him not."

"All the multitude of the country of the Gerasens besought Him to depart from them."

The Jews in the temple "took up stones to stone Him."

They plotted to put Him to death.

JESUS WAS REJECTED DURING HIS SUFFERING LIFE.

By Judas.

By St. Peter: "I know not the man."

By the Jews: "Away with Him." "We have no king but Cæsar."

By God Himself—in a sense: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

WHY THIS REJECTION AND CONTEMPT?

It was due to man's ignorance and malice.

It was part of God's plan of redemption.

It was a reparation for man's pride.

APPLICATION:

Not to be astonished when wrong overpowers right.

The Christian is, like His loved Master, despised and rejected by the worldly-minded.

51. "ECCE HOMO!"

"Jesus came forth bearing the crown of thorns and the purple garment." And Pilate "saith to them: Behold the Man." (John xix. 5.)

INTRODUCTION:

This scene took place in the courtyard of the Forum. Pilate and his guards came forth, then Jesus was led out by the soldiers and presented to the people. For a moment there was a dead silence, a straining of all eyes to see Him. Then the shouts of the chief priests and their servants rent the air: "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" Stirred up by their rulers, the common people joined in the clamor for Jesus' condemnation.

WHAT DID THE SPECTATORS SEE?

"The Man of Sorrows."

"A worm and no man."

Yet, in reality, He was the "beautiful One in His robe, walking in the greatness of His strength." (Is. lxiii. 1.)

Their King crowned, though they knew Him not as their Sovereign.

One dumb as a lamb before its shearers.

WHAT ARE THEIR SENTIMENTS?

The people who knew Jesus are filled with compassion.

His disciples are overwhelmed with grief.
Jesus' foes gloat over the spectacle of His
humiliation.

Mary worships her Son and her King.

The angels adore their Lord.

The devils rejoice in their evil deed accom-
plished.

WHAT ARE JESUS' DISPOSITIONS IN THIS
AWFUL HOUR OF HUMILIATION?

He offers Himself to suffer even more:
"Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God."

He accepts the humiliation, "taking on Him-
self the form of a slave."

He longs to be "lifted up," as the means of
drawing all men to Him.

He pities His foes, who "know not what they
do."

He loves His own even to the end.

APPLICATION:

Learn to accept contempt, humiliation, and
bodily sufferings when God allows them to
assail us.

Be willing to sacrifice our reputation if God
asks it of us.

52. THE KINGSHIP OF JESUS

“Pilate said to Him: Art Thou a king, then? Jesus answered: Thou sayest that I am a king. For this was I born, and for this came I into the world; that I should give testimony to the truth.” (John xviii. 37.) *“And Pilate wrote a title also: and he put it upon the cross. And the writing was: Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.”* (Ibid. xix. 19.) *“The Lamb shall overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings.”* (Apoc. xvii. 14.)

INTRODUCTION:

Before the Sanhedrin, Jesus was condemned because He asserted Himself to be the Son of God. Before Pilate the Jews accused Him of aspiring to royal dignity, and this was the “cause” of His condemnation inscribed on the title of the cross. Pilate knew that Jesus laid claim to no earthly throne.

EXAMINE SOME OF THE EVENTS OF JESUS’ LIFE AND AS EACH SCENE PASSES BEFORE OUR MENTAL VISION, LET US ASK HIM REVERENTLY: “MASTER, ART THOU INDEED A KING?”

Think of Him

Born in a stable; cradled in a manger; exiled in Egypt; laboring in the workshop at Nazareth; fasting and enduring temptation in the desert; having not

where to lay His sacred head; praying on the mountain-slopes the whole night; dragged to the edge of the precipice by the Nazarenes; threatened with stoning; sweating blood in Gethsemani; blindfolded, spat upon when clothed as a mock king; scourged and crowned with thorns; rejected for Barabbas; carrying His cross, crucified, dead, and buried.

JESUS' ANSWER: "FOR THIS WAS I BORN, FOR THIS CAME I INTO THE WORLD, TO GIVE TESTIMONY OF THE TRUTH."

Jesus is the Truth because "He is King of kings and Lord of lords."

As King, He wrests His kingdom from the father of lies; delivers the slaves of sin and frees them. Cf. "The truth shall make you free" (John viii. 32); pays in blood the ransom of His subjects; leads the faithful to victory against the devil, the world, and the flesh.

HENCE THE CHRISTIAN IS OF A ROYAL RACE, A SON OF GOD BY ADOPTION, A CO-INHERITOR WITH JESUS, HIS KING.

"If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him."

APPLICATION:

Be loyal to Jesus, our King: "In what place soever Thou shalt be, Lord, my King, either in death or in life, there will Thy servant be." (2 Kings xv. 21.)

53. JESUS, ON THE CROSS, OUR
DIVINE EXEMPLAR

“See that thou make all things according to the pattern which was shown thee on the mount.” (Heb. viii. 5.)

INTRODUCTION:

Standing on Calvary, in presence of our crucified Saviour, let us meditate on “the Pattern,” shown us on this sacred mountain, that we may learn the lessons He would teach us.

THE HEINOUSNESS OF SIN.

Which crucified Jesus in
Mind.
Body.
Affection.
Reputation.

This multiple crucifixion was ever before Him from the moment of His Incarnation.

THE LOVE OF THE FATHER FOR THE HUMAN RACE.

“God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son.” (John iii. 16.)

This love was
Eternal.
Immense.
Inclusive of all His creatures.

THE NEED OF REPARATION FOR SIN.

God's justice must punish sin.

He punished it in Jesus, our Surety.

We must strive to satisfy God for our sins, in our feeble measure "filling up those things that are wanting in the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh, for His Body, which is the Church." (Col. i. 24.)

DUTY OF LOYALTY TO OUR KING.

In union with Our Lady and St. John and the faithful ministering women.

In professing our Faith by word and deed.

LESSON OF HUMILITY, because

We are all reprieved criminals.

We are capable of great crimes.

We are impotent of our nature.

We caused His bitter passion.

LESSON OF CHARITY.

"Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends."
(John xv. 13.)

Yet Jesus lays down His life for His foes; hence we must love all men—friends or foes—and be zealous for their sanctification and salvation.

APPLICATION:

Ever keep the Pattern "given us on the mount" before our eyes, especially during Lent.

54. THE FIVE WOUNDS

“What are these wounds in the midst of Thy hands? . . . With these was I wounded in the house of them that loved Me.” (Zach. xiii. 6.)

INTRODUCTION:

The Fridays of Lent are set apart to the memory of some mystery of the passion, each giving some special aspect of it.

THE FIVE WOUNDS OF OUR CRUCIFIED SAVIOUR ARE SACRED SOURCES.

From them flowed “the very price paid for our ransom.” (Sec. for this feast.)

Life, healing, and strength flow from them.

Through the precious blood, which flowed from them, the Church prays that, “summoned one day by God from this life, it may be ours with joy and gladness to pass through the gates of Paradise.” (Postcom. for feast of the Passion.)

The redeemed in heaven bless God for these wounds, to which they owe their glory and happiness. We hope hereafter to contemplate them.

They contribute to the glory of Jesus throughout eternity: He is worshiped as “the Lamb that was slain.”

LESSONS WE MAY LEARN FROM THE PRECIOUS WOUNDS OF OUR SAVIOUR.

We must learn to rejoice in them: “You

shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviour's fountains." (Is. xii. 3.)

That the Church would have us "bear in mind the lessons of patience which He has taught."

We should show by our fervor that these wounds are engraved on our hearts.

As members of Christ's mystical body, the Church, we ought to rejoice in the glory which, by these wounds, Jesus procured to His eternal Father.

We can offer, for the salvation of sinners, the precious blood which flowed from these wounds.

The sight of these wounds should arouse us to sincere sorrow for sin, seeing that Our Saviour was wounded for our iniquities.

The contemplation of these wounds should deter us from sin.

APPLICATION:

Which of these lessons do we most need to learn?

55. WOUNDED BY FRIENDS

“With these I was wounded in the house of them that loved Me.” (Zach. xiii. 6.) *“Behold, I have graven thee in My hands.”* (Is. xlix. 16.)

INTRODUCTION :

One of the keenest pangs of Jesus' passion must have been the fact that they were inflicted upon Him by His own people. These sufferings were continual and manifold in their nature—physical and moral. Trace the course of Jesus' sufferings.

THE RULERS OF ISRAEL PERSECUTED JESUS.

Herod the Great sought to kill Him.

Herod Antipas mocked Him.

The Sanhedrists persecuted, calumniated, and condemned Him to death.

THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL PERSECUTED JESUS.

They “bore false witness against Him.”

They endeavored to stone Him.

They clamored for His crucifixion.

They rejected Him for Barabbas.

They mocked Him in the house of Caiphas.

They mocked Him when He hung upon the cross.

HIS “BRETHREN” REJECTED HIM.

Those of His own village despised Him.

Accused Him of madness.

Strove to cast Him over the cliff.

THOSE WHOM HE HAD BENEFITED,

Abandoned Him during His passion.

Feared to have intercourse with Him; e.g.,
the parents of the man born blind.

Showed no gratitude; e.g., the nine lepers.

**HIS OWN DISCIPLES CAUSED HIM SUFFER-
ING.**

They dared not confess Him before men.

They made no effort to save Him.

They "walked no more with Him" when He
taught them the mystery of the Holy Eu-
charist.

They stood "afar off" when He was cruci-
fied.

**HIS OWN APOSTLES CAUSED HIM SUFFER-
ING.**

Before His passion.

By their want of comprehension, their im-
perfections and faults; e.g., quarreling
over precedence, ambitious for first
places, even presuming to rebuke Him;
begrudging Him the ointment.

During His passion.

He was betrayed, denied, abandoned by
His own. They slept in Gethsemani.
They lost all faith in His Resurrection.

APPLICATION:

Consider Our Lord's sufferings when we suf-
fer at the hands of men, and imitate His
example.

56. THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

“You were not redeemed with corruptible things as gold or silver . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb unspotted and undefiled.” (1 Pet. i. 18.) *“Jesus Christ . . . hath loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood.”* (Apoc. i. 5.)

INTRODUCTION:

Men value life above all things; and “blood” is a synonym for “life.”

EXCELLENCE OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD.

Seen in that it

Is due to the conception of the infinite love of God.

Was created when Jesus became incarnate.

Poured forth for the world’s ransom.

WHEN JESUS SHED HIS BLOOD:

At His Circumcision.

In Gethsemani.

When He was scourged.

When He was crowned with thorns.

On the road to Calvary.

When nailed to the cross.

When His side was pierced.

FRUITS OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD:

The ransom and nourishment of the Church Militant.

The solace of the holy souls in purgatory when offered for them in the holy Mass.

The joy of the saints in heaven.

CHRISTIANS PROFIT BY THE PRECIOUS BLOOD:

When first they receive sanctifying grace in Baptism.

When they receive actual graces.

When they assist at holy Mass.

When they gain indulgences.

APPLICATION:

If Our Lord shed His blood and died for us, we should live for Him.

“Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift” of the precious blood freely given for man’s redemption.

EASTER SUBJECTS

57. THE FEAST OF EASTER

"He is risen. Alleluia!"

INTRODUCTION:

The Resurrection is the crowning mystery of the Incarnation. "If Christ be not risen again . . . then your faith is vain." (1 Cor. xv. 14.)

BEFORE THE RESURRECTION ON EASTER DAY (ON EARTH):

Consider the sepulcher. Jesus' body still in the icy grasp of death.

Angels keep watch within that sanctuary, the Roman soldiers guard it without.

The disciples of Jesus are still in Jerusalem and its suburbs, either praying and sorrowing, "sleeping for sorrow," or preparing the spices to embalm His body.

Our Blessed Lady awaits her Divine Son with confidence, for it is the "third day," on which her Son must rise again.

Jesus' enemies—the chief priests—still exult in their evil deed. Some are busy in the temple, preparing to offer sacrifice to Jehovah as soon as the sun rises.

JESUS COMES FROM HADES.

He is accompanied by the souls from Hades. They are full of joy. Their long waiting is over.

We may presume that He allows them to contemplate His lacerated body, to see the effects of their sins.

Then, in their presence, His holy soul enters that dead body, and instantly He rises glorious from His tomb.
Angels and saints adore Him.

EASTER IN HEAVEN.

God the Father rejoices that man's redemption is accomplished.
The angels around His throne adore; now they understand better the mystery of the Incarnation.

EASTER IN HELL.

Satan fears; he knows that he has outwitted himself in urging the Jews to crucify the Lord of Life.
He knows, too, that his time for ruining souls must, before long, come to an end. Jesus has conquered. Satan knows for certain that He is indeed the Son of God.

APPLICATION:

What stupendous mysteries have taken place unknown to mortals or known to a few only; e.g., the Incarnation, Resurrection, Ascension, Transubstantiation.
How insignificant are all earthly things in comparison with eternal realities!
Be it ours to live in the spirit of the "*Sursum corda*," especially during the holy season of Easter, which should draw our thoughts heavenward, "where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God."

58. JESUS' GLORIFIED BODY

"The shape of His countenance was altered." *"His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment became white and glittering."* (Matt. xvii; Mark ix; Luke ix.)

INTRODUCTION:

What is said of Jesus at His Transfiguration holds good of His glorified body when He rose from the dead. If, on Easter Day, "the guards were struck with terror, and became as dead men" when they saw an angel, whose "countenance was as lightning and his raiment white as snow" (Matt. xxviii. 3), what must have been the manifestation of the Risen Lord of the angels had He not concealed it in consideration for man's weakness? Consider the four qualities of Jesus' glorified body.

IMPASSIBILITY.

Hence no longer subject to
Hunger and thirst, cold and heat, weariness and pain.

SUBTILITY.

Jesus' glorified body is no longer subject to the laws of nature. Matter can not impede His progress.

Thus He passed out of the sepulcher *before* the stone was rolled away.

Jesus' body was henceforth invisible to human eyes, unless He willed to manifest Himself.

Moreover, He could and did assume "another shape" or appearance on certain occasions; e.g., to St. Mary Magdalen, to the disciples of Emmaus.

CLARITY.

This was its natural state, but He veiled His majesty. St. John, who, in a glorious vision, was privileged to see "the Son of man," thus describes Him: "His head and His hairs were white, as white wool and as snow; His eyes were as a flame of fire. And His feet like unto fine brass as in a burning furnace . . . and His face was as the sun shineth in his power." (Apoc. i. 14.)

No human comparisons can express Jesus' glory.

AGILITY.

In virtue of this quality the glorified body is not bound by laws that regulate time and space. He moves as the lightning which flashes across the heavens.

APPLICATION:

We adore this glorified body in heaven, where one day we hope to contemplate it. The Eucharistic species veil this same glorious body.

Our bodies will also have these qualities, if we attain to the resurrection of the just.

59. "RISEN WITH CHRIST"

"Therefore, if ye be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon earth. For you are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God. . . . Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth."
(Col. iii. 1-5.)

INTRODUCTION :

In these terse, pregnant words, St. Paul sets before us the great lesson taught by Our Lord's resurrection. Consider the passage in detail.

"THEREFORE, IF YE BE RISEN WITH CHRIST."

Hence the Christian *can* rise with Christ.

Rising with Christ connotes:

Living in the light of eternal realities.

Cf. "We look not at the things seen, but at the things which are not seen."

(2 Cor. iv. 18.) The former are "eternal," the latter "temporal."

Holding the things of earth lightly, ready to give them up at our Master's bidding, using them only for His glory. Among "the things that are upon earth" we must include pleasures, riches, legitimate joys, health—even life itself.

“SEEK THE THINGS THAT ARE ABOVE.”

“*Seek*” with set purpose to find the object of our search: without counting labor and suffering, which that search involves.

“*The things above*”; i.e.,

The society of the redeemed, of our loved ones who have gone before, of our Immaculate Mother.

The sacred humanity of Jesus.

The beatific vision of God for ever.

“FOR YOU ARE DEAD.”

The dead are indifferent to things of earth.

The dead need not the things of earth.

The Christian, by detachment from these things and by using them for a higher end than mere bodily, personal satisfaction, shows that he is dead to the world.

MORTIFY, THEREFORE, YOUR MEMBERS; I.E.,

Your *body* with its senses.

Your *soul* with its evil passions.

This involves strength, which is granted to prayer; willingness to suffer; being vigilant when Nature opposes grace; setting before us the example of our Risen Saviour.

APPLICATION:

Examine to which earthly things we are very much alive. Renounce these things, in so far as they prevent us from rising with Christ.

60. APPARITION OF OUR LORD TO
ST. MARY MAGDALEN

“Jesus saith to her: Mary. She turning saith to Him: Rabboni.” (John xx. 16.)

INTRODUCTION:

Consider the circumstances: Having rested on the Sabbath day, St. Mary Magdalen goes to the sepulcher very early on the first day of the week. She finds the grave empty, and immediately runs to tell SS. Peter and John. She returns to the sepulcher and, when these two apostles leave, Mary Magdalen remains in the garden close to the sepulcher, weeping. There, Jesus reveals Himself to her.

ST. MARY MAGDALEN'S LOVE FOR OUR BLESSED
LORD.

It led her to stand by the cross braving humiliation for His sake.

It led her to render Him loyal service by Preparing the ointments to embalm His body.

Going early to the sepulcher to accomplish her labor of love.

Remaining by the sepulcher weeping and inconsolable when she found not her Lord's body.

Being ready to attempt the impossible—to remove His body unaided.

Gladly giving His message to the disciples.

Persevering even when her testimony was rejected.

JESUS REWARDED HER LOVE.

He revealed Himself to her before showing Himself to any of the other disciples.

He filled her soul with inexpressible joy when He called her by her name, "Mary."

He sent her as His messenger to His apostles.

He willed that the story of her loyalty should be handed down to all generations (in the Sacred Scriptures).

WHAT LESSONS MAY WE LEARN FROM THIS APPARITION OF JESUS TO ST. MARY MAGDALEN?

To atone for past sins by deeper love.

To confess our faith generously and courageously.

To give our Divine Master loyal, devoted service.

To love our Blessed Lady and sympathize with her as the Mother of Sorrows.

To be His messengers to our brethren.

To persevere in works of zeal, even when we meet with rebuffs.

All who seek Our Lord earnestly never fail to find Him.

61. JESUS APPEARS TO THE APOSTLES
ON EASTER DAY

“Now, when it was late that same day, and the doors were shut, where the disciples were gathered together for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them: Peace be to you.” (John xx. 19.)

INTRODUCTION:

Consider what had preceded on that ever-memorable day. The women had announced that the tomb was empty; then Jesus appeared to them and sent them to the disciples as His messengers. Later, He was seen by Peter, and, toward nightfall, the disciples of Emmaus had returned and related their story. Tense expectancy filled every soul there present; suddenly Jesus Himself stood in their midst.

WHO DEIGNS TO VISIT THESE DISCIPLES?

Jesus, their loved Master, whom they had treated so ungenerously.

One who had broken the bands of death.

The Son of God in His glorified humanity.

Their Saviour, who had shed His blood for them.

HOW DOES HE TREAT THEM?

With infinite tenderness, instantly calming their fears.

With loving familiarity, inviting them to see and touch His hands and feet.

With confidence in their loyalty, since on this first apparition He entrusts them with the ministry of reconciliation.

With boundless generosity, filling them with joy, bequeathing them His peace.

THE EFFECTS OF THIS MANIFESTATION OF THE RISEN SAVIOUR.

The apostles were at first filled with fear, for man ever shrinks from contact with that which is supernatural or spiritual.

They thought they saw a spirit.

Joy and peace, His precious gifts, filled their souls, and banished the confusion they would—after their desertion—naturally feel.

Unalterable confidence in Him who had overcome death—even as He had predicted.

Spiritual enlightenment as to the meaning of the prophecies of the Old Testament and of Our Lord concerning His passion, death, and resurrection.

Deeper love and unswerving loyalty to Jesus, who had called them to follow Him.

APPLICATION:

In holy communion Jesus “our Hidden God” deigns to visit our souls.

He then gives us special proofs of His love, even as He gave the apostles proofs of it.

We, too, can live in the joy and peace of God, provided we resist sin.

62. THE JOY OF THE DISCIPLES

"The disciples, therefore, were glad when they saw the Lord." (John xx. 20.)

INTRODUCTION:

Contrast the crushing sorrow of the disciples on Good Friday with their overwhelming joy in Jesus' resurrection. What an abyss separates these two states of soul!

JESUS HAD FULFILLED HIS PROMISES, THEREFORE THEY REJOICED.

On Maundy Thursday He made them three promises:

"Your sorrow shall be turned into joy."

"I will see you again."

"Your joy no man shall take from you."
(John xvi. 22.)

THEY REJOICED "IN THE LORD"; I.E., FOR THEIR DIVINE MASTER'S SAKE.

He had passed through the portals of death and returned to them.

He could die no more.

He had gloriously conquered His earthly foes.

Henceforth He could not suffer.

He rejoiced in having accomplished His Father's will, and they shared His joy.

His work of founding the kingdom of God upon earth was not overthrown.

THEY REJOICED FOR THEIR OWN SAKES.

Their Master had forgiven them freely; He even condescended still to call them His "brethren."

He confirmed them in their sublime calling; they were still to be His witnesses, even to "the ends of the earth," and—through their successors—to "the consummation of all things."

His glorious Resurrection was a gage that they too should rise.

OUR BLESSED LADY'S JOY ON EASTER DAY.

What ecstasy filled her pure soul as she looked upon His glorious body!

As her sorrow had been vast and deep as an ocean, so her joy was commensurate.

She rejoiced in seeing part of the prophecies of the angel Gabriel, of Simeon, fulfilled.

She looked forward to the eternal reign of her Son—His kingdom should have no end.

APPLICATION:

As joy is one of the distinctive Easter virtues, all Christians should rejoice when this holy season comes round.

Even though bending beneath the burden of the cross, the faithful can rejoice unselfishly in the joy of their Divine Master: "Death shall no more have dominion over Him." (Rom. vi. 9.)

63. OUR LORD'S PROMISES TO HIS
DISCIPLES

"It is expedient for you that I go." (John xvi. 7.)

INTRODUCTION:

In the discourse in the Cenacle, Jesus consoled His apostles by explaining that His departure was expedient for them. We may consider two of the reasons which He gave them.

"I GO TO PREPARE A PLACE FOR YOU."

This preparation consists in

His clothing us with sanctifying grace.

His enabling us to acquire the Christian virtues.

His purifying us more and more from sin.

His detaching us by trials and interior enlightenment from earthly things.

His sanctifying our souls and bodies by His Eucharistic presence.

"I WILL COME AGAIN AND TAKE YOU TO MYSELF, THAT WHERE I AM, YOU ALSO MAY BE."

He makes this promise as our Saviour, our Brother, our Friend.

He comes to us by His grace, by the Holy Eucharist, by His inspirations and in prayer calling us to live for heaven.

He comes to us at the hour of death.

This promised visit is

A proof of His love.

An incentive to vigilance.

OUR LORD WILLS TO HAVE US WITH HIM.

He expressed this desire in His prayer to the Father: "I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me, may be with Me." (John xvii. 24.)

He desires that His disciples may see His glory, given Him by the Father.

He wills that they should enjoy

The beatific vision.

The reward of their good works.

He has an infinite love for His weak, sinful creatures.

Even here upon earth He would have His own with Him; therefore

He condescends to be their Divine Guest.

He promises never to abandon them.

He asks for their love in return for His.

APPLICATION:

Take Our Lord's promises as addressed to us personally.

Ever desire the best gifts, and these are supernatural and enduring.

Think oftener of Our Lord's coming.

64. CHRIST'S GIFT OF PEACE

"Peace be to you. It is I: fear not."
(Luke xxiv. 36.)

INTRODUCTION:

Jesus is "the Prince of Peace"; hence the angels sang their song of joy and peace over His manger; and Jesus, the Risen Saviour, bestows these precious gifts upon His disciples.

"PEACE BE TO YOU" IS JESUS' EASTER GREETING.

It coincides with the Aaronic blessing:
"May the Lord bless and keep you and give you peace."

The Church ever greets her children thus.
During holy Mass, after confession, at the visitation of the sick; in her prayers for the dead, she asks that they may "rest in peace."

JESUS, BY HIS PASSION, HAS PURCHASED PEACE FOR MEN.

Hence peace was announced in Bethlehem.
Solemnly promised on Maundy Thursday.
Given on Easter Day.

DIVINE PROMISES CONCERNING PEACE:

"Be of one mind . . . and the God of peace shall be with you." (Phil. iv. 9.)

“The God of peace shall crush Satan under your feet speedily.” (Rom. xvi. 20.)

“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you.” (John xiv. 27.)

“The fruit of the Spirit is charity, joy, peace.” (Gal. v. 22.)

“The fruit of justice is sown in peace, to them that make peace.” (James iii. 18.)

OBSTACLES TO PEACE:

Deliberate sin—“no peace for the wicked.”

A state of tepidity.

Inordinate attachment to

Temporal possessions.

Creatures.

Our own will.

Selfishness and jealousy.

Disobedience to the voice of God calling the soul to a higher life; e.g., to enter Religion. None can resist God and be at peace.

APPLICATION:

Strive after the things that make for peace.

Pray for this precious gift at holy Mass.

65. THE APPARITION TO THE DISCIPLES
OF EMMAUS

“He appeared in another shape to two of them walking, as they were going into the country. And they going told it to the rest: neither did they believe them.” (Mark xvi.)

INTRODUCTION:

In this apparition, as in that to St. Mary Magdalen, Jesus appeared “in another shape.” This explains why, in each case, Jesus was not recognized. A glorified body *makes itself manifest*; of its nature it is invisible to human eyes. Further, it can assume other forms.

THE DISCIPLES OF EMMAUS BEFORE THE AP-
PARITION.

They left the company of the disciples gathered in Jerusalem.

They spoke of their crucified Master.

As they spoke of Him and discussed the details of His passion, Jesus joined them.

Their “eyes were held,” the Risen Saviour did not will to reveal Himself at once.

THE DISCIPLES DURING OUR SAVIOUR’S VISIT.

Note their question: “Art Thou a lonely stranger?” (*Tu solus peregrinus es?*) or “Dwellest Thou alone in Jerusalem?” (Gk.)

They confess their former faith in Jesus “the prophet,” but hope no longer in Him.

Apparition to the Disciples of Emmaus 139

They relate the story of His crucifixion and the rumor of His resurrection and the vision of angels.

They accept His reproof and listen to His exposition of the predictions of the Old Testament.

With "hearts burning" within them, they constrain Him to accept hospitality. His eloquence has enthralled them.

They sit down to table: "being not aware of it," they entertained not angels, but the Lord of the angels.

Jesus makes Himself known to them in the breaking of bread.

THE DISCIPLES AFTER JESUS' APPARITION.

They return instantly to Jerusalem.

They announce the glad tidings.

Though not believed, they falter not in their testimony.

They are rewarded by a second visit from their Risen Lord. "Whilst they were speaking, Jesus stood in the midst of them and said: Peace be to you; it is I, fear not."

APPLICATION:

Special blessings are promised to those who converse about God: Cf. Mal. iii. 16, 17.

Jesus has promised: "Where there are two or three gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matt. xviii. 20.)

66. OUR DIVINE GUIDE

“Jesus Himself also, drawing near, went with them.” (Luke xxiv. 15.)

INTRODUCTION:

Life is a journey, it leads us along various paths. Now our way lies through easy, pleasant paths, now through rugged uphill tracks. Now we struggle against the wintry blast of adversity, now we bask in the sunshine of peace and joy. In all the vicissitudes of life's journey, Jesus, drawing near, goes with us Himself.

JESUS DRAWS NEAR TO THE SOULS OF THE FAITHFUL BY THE DIVINELY APPOINTED CHANNELS OF GRACE; E.G.,

In Baptism.

When we receive the sacrament of Penance.

In holy communion.

By means of spiritual instructions.

When we pray.

By a life of union with the soul that responds to His call to go higher.

UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES DOES OUR DIVINE GUIDE HIMSELF DRAW NEAR?

When we face dangers in obedience to His command; e.g.,

He walked on the water to go to the assistance of His disciples whom He had bidden cross the lake.

When we are tempted. Thus Judas, Peter, and the apostles in Gethsemani were warned by Jesus.

When we lose faith and hope; e.g., the disciples of Emmaus.

When we are in sorrow; e.g., His visit to Martha and Mary.

When we seek Him; e.g., Zacheus, St. Mary Magdalen, the storm on the lake.

When we die. Cf. "I will come and take you unto Myself."

OUR DIVINE GUIDE COMES TO US UNDER VARIOUS FORMS; E.G.,

As Saviour.	As Consoler.
As Brother.	As Physician.
As Friend.	As Good Shepherd.
As Counselor.	As Model.
As Teacher.	As Food of our souls.

APPLICATION:

We must ever implore Him to "abide with us," for the time of our life's pilgrimage is further spent as our years go by.

He desires us to constrain Him to remain with us.

We must have full confidence in our Divine Guide and follow whithersoever His pierced hand leads us.

67. THE APPARITION TO ST. THOMAS

“After eight days, again His disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst and said: Peace be to you.” (John xx. 26.)

INTRODUCTION:

This apparition brings into relief the marvelous condescension of Jesus, who deigned to comply with the conditions laid down by His unbelieving apostle.

ST. THOMAS'S FAULTS:

Thomas was not with his brethren on Easter Sunday when Jesus appeared to them. We may presume that the faith of those who had seen Our Lord jarred upon his incredulity.

He refused to accept the testimony of the holy women and of St. Peter.

He presumed to lay down the conditions under which he would believe.

His incredulity had in it an element of obstinacy.

ST. THOMAS'S PUNISHMENT.

He was deprived for eight days of the joy of seeing his Risen Lord.

Jesus humbled him by offering to comply with the condition which St. Thomas had laid down.

ST. THOMAS'S REPARATION.

He acknowledged Jesus as his Lord and God, thus publicly atoning for his incredulity and obstinacy.

LESSONS WE MAY LEARN FROM THIS APPARITION OF OUR LORD TO ST. THOMAS:

To remain united with our brethren in Christ, lest we lose God's graces.

To distrust our own judgment.

To acknowledge a fault frankly.

That God can bring good out of evil. Thus St. Thomas's incredulity was the occasion of Our Lord's uttering that blessing which is given to every believer: "Blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed."

Frequently to repeat St. Thomas's act of faith, "My Lord and my God."¹

Never to lay down our conditions to God.

¹ Pope Pius X (Acta Sæ Sedis May 18, 1907.) granted an indulgence of 7 years and 7 quarantines for each devout recital at the Consecration of the Mass, and when the Blessed Sacrament is exposed in times of Exposition. A plenary indulgence is granted monthly under the usual conditions, i. e., confession, communion and prayer for the Pope's intentions.

68. THE APPARITION BY THE SEA OF
TIBERIAS

“Jesus showed Himself . . . to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias. . . . There were together: Simon Peter and Thomas . . . Nathanael . . . the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples.” (John xxi. 1, 2.)

INTRODUCTION:

During the interval between the Resurrection and the Ascension, the apostles appear to have returned—at least, occasionally—to their callings. Hence, we find seven disciples engaged in fishing. The two unnamed disciples were probably apostles.

BEFORE JESUS MANIFESTED HIMSELF.

These seven were united in charity and toil. St. Peter was their leader as usual.

Their labor was fruitless: “That night they caught nothing.” The Master had so ordained it.

JESUS PRESENT AND UNRECOGNIZED.

He stands upon the shore and addresses them.

They obey His command: “Cast the net on the right side of the ship.”

The multitude of fishes enclosed is the reward of their obedience.

The net did not break; He willed they should lose no portion of His gift.

JESUS PRESENT AND RECOGNIZED.

Their "eyes were opened" by the result of their obedience; they had caught "a multitude of fishes."

St. John, the beloved apostle, is the first to recognize Jesus; St. Peter, in his ardor, the first to go to Him.

The others bring their catch to land.

Jesus invites them to breakfast: He Himself has prepared a meal miraculously.

He deigns to serve them Himself. Though risen from the dead, He was in the midst of them "as He that serveth." (Luke xxii. 27.)

The disciples, awed by His presence, keep silence during that meal.

APPLICATION:

Jesus comes to His own precisely when they most need Him. He *can* and *will* fructify our labors for Him, *in His own good time.*

Purity and love ever recognize the Lord, whatever "shape" He may assume.

He deigns to prepare our meals, to serve us; the food we eat is created by Him.

In an instant, when we least expect it, God can bless the labors of long years. Therefore we must be content to toil on—leaving the results to Him—without ever yielding to discouragement. One sows, another reaps, and God rewards both.

69. CHRIST'S CHARGE TO ST. PETER

“Jesus saith to Simon Peter: Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me more than these? He saith to Him: Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith to him: Feed My lambs. He saith to him again: Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me? He saith to Him: Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith to him: Feed My lambs. He said to him the third time: Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me? Peter was grieved, because He had said to him the third time: Lovest thou Me? And he said to Him: Lord, Thou knowest all things: Thou knowest that I love Thee. He said to him: Feed My sheep.” (John xxi. 15-17.)

INTRODUCTION:

Contemplate the scene by the Lake of Tiberias, when Jesus asked St. Peter for a triple confession of love, as a reparation for his triple denial.

TO WHOM DID OUR LORD PUT THE QUESTION: “LOVEST THOU ME MORE THAN THESE?”

To one of the chosen Twelve, one of the privileged three apostles.

To one who had made great protestations of love for his Divine Master.

To one who, in spite of these protestations of fidelity, had denied his Lord thrice.

- To one who had learned from his sad experience how great was his weakness—how strong the power of the evil one.
- To one who, being pardoned, longed to atone for his momentary lack of courage.

WHY DID JESUS THUS PUBLICLY QUESTION HIS APOSTLE?

- To give St. Peter an occasion to repair his fault in presence of his fellow-apostles.
- To prove to all, by reinstating Peter as Head of the Church, that his sin was freely forgiven.
- To teach His disciples in all ages that greater love is the truest reparation for past sins.
- To teach all His disciples that He wills to be loved above all others.

HOW DID OUR LORD REWARD ST. PETER?

- By confirming him in his office of chief Pastor; confiding to him both the lambs and the sheep of the One Fold.
- By predicting Peter's martyrdom in his old age, thus giving him an assurance that ultimately he would lay down his life for the Gospel.

APPLICATION:

We should learn from St. Peter's example to repair our faults by loving more, to rise more humble after each sin, and to trust firmly in the Divine assurance of pardon.

70. "FOLLOW THOU ME"

"Peter turning about, saw that disciple whom Jesus loved following . . . he saith to Jesus: Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith to him: So I will have him to remain till I come, what is it to thee? Follow thou Me." (John xxi. 20-22.)

INTRODUCTION:

St. Peter and St. John were intimate friends. Both were privileged disciples of Jesus, having received signal proofs of their Master's love. Therefore, when St. Peter had been told that he was to give his life for Jesus, he in all simplicity asked Jesus what the future reserved for John, his special friend.

JESUS REPROVES ST. PETER'S CURIOSITY.

By declining to answer his question.
Bidding him look to himself, and follow Him.

BY HIS REBUKE TO ST. PETER, OUR LORD TEACHES US NOT TO BE CURIOUS.

Therefore we are not to examine the conduct of our fellows, still less to censure and condemn them.

We are not to seek to unveil the future, either for ourselves or those dear to us. Both we and they are in God's keeping, and those whom God keeps are well kept.

HE TEACHES US TO LOOK TO OURSELVES.
"FOLLOW THOU ME."

We must *follow*, even though we can not understand the "why and the wherefore."

We must follow when God leads us whither naturally we would not.

We must follow Our Lord closely, constantly, and generously.

The call is *personal*. "Follow *thou*."

St. Peter was called by name: "Simon, son of John."

The call is *clear*. Each soul who is faithful to the inspirations of grace and the teaching of Our Lord hears that divine call.

"Follow *thou Me*." Jesus is our Divine Guide, the Good Shepherd, who "goeth before."

Of all true disciples it can be said: "A stranger they follow not."

"Lord, to whom shall we go," if not to Thee?

APPLICATION:

We follow Our Lord by imitating His virtues in our feeble measure.

What virtue would He especially have us practise?

71. A SEARCHING QUESTION

“*Lovest thou Me more than these?*” (John xxi. 15.)

INTRODUCTION:

The first and great commandment is: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with thy whole mind.” (Matt. xxii. 37.) Therefore God must have the prior place in our affections. Moreover, because Jesus laid down His life for men, thus giving the greatest proof of love, He wills to be loved by them in return.

THE QUESTION: “LOVEST THOU ME?”

God has a right to ask it since

He is our Creator.

He alone is worthy of our love.

We depend on Him every instant of our lives.

Jesus has redeemed us, and thus has a claim upon our love.

LOVEST THOU ME MORE THAN THESE?

Primarily this signifies “more than these others love Me.” It is allowed to strive to emulate our neighbors in charity, and this emulation is compatible with humility and fraternal charity.

It is permissible to apply these words, “more than these,” to all creatures—animate or

inanimate; e.g., our friends, relatives, pleasures, comforts, interests, riches, health, even life itself. Lovest thou Me more than thou lovest these creatures?

“LORD, THOU KNOWEST ALL THINGS.”

He knows all that concerns man—his past, present, and future; e.g., his desire to serve God, weak though it be; his efforts to overcome self; his frequent relapses; his real regret for these falls; the strength of Satan’s temptations; the obstacles that block men’s path to heaven.

IN SPITE OF FAILURES AND FAULTS IN THE PAST, THE SOUL CAN, IN ALL HUMILITY, CONFESS: “THOU KNOWEST THAT I LOVE THEE.”

For Our Saviour knows “what is in man.”

He knows that we have

A real desire to put Him first.

An earnest longing to live for Him alone.

A real zeal for souls.

A yearning to see Him “face to face.”

APPLICATION:

Learn to see God in all things.

Learn to love God in all men.

Learn to do His holy will in all things.

This is the touchstone of love.

Wherein does God come *second* or not at all?

72. "HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN"—I

"The Lord Jesus, after He had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God." (Mark xvi. 19.)

INTRODUCTION:

Contemplate that scene enacted some nineteen hundred years ago. Jesus leads His apostles and disciples out of the Holy City. He is about to leave them. Our Lady and the ministering women accompany.

THE DISCIPLES LED TO MOUNT OLIVET.

The little group of "one hundred and twenty" persons consisted of Jesus, Our Saviour; the eleven apostles, some disciples, the Blessed Mother of God, and the ministering women.

What mingled feelings filled their souls!

Jesus could look back over the work of His life upon earth, to which He was about to set the seal.

Mary could testify that all that had been predicted of and to her was accomplished.

The apostles now realize better what a sublime mission is theirs. Never had such a work been committed to men.

The disciples and holy women realize what a glorious privilege has been theirs—that of knowing the Son of God in the flesh—and of being His followers.

Jesus and His apostles had passed along that road on the evening of Maundy Thursday, but under what different circumstances!

JESUS ASCENDS FROM MOUNT OLIVET.

Before leaving them

He renews His apostles' divine commission.

He blesses them visibly for the last time.

A cloud received Him out of their sight.

While they still gaze heavenward, two angels appear and promise that Our Lord will return one day in like manner.

Meanwhile, adoring angels accompany their Lord and witness His enthronement as man in heaven.

THE RETURN FROM MOUNT OLIVET.

They went back adoring.

They were filled with joy for their Master's triumph.

United in charity and prayer, they waited for the coming of the Paraclete.

APPLICATION :

Learn to rejoice in Our Lord's glory.

He has overcome and we shall one day share His triumph.

The Ascension should teach us to live "looking up to heaven"; i.e., to think often of heaven and to long to enter upon the possession of our promised inheritance.

73. "HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN"—II

"The Lord Jesus . . . was taken up into heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God."
(Mark xvi. 19.)

INTRODUCTION :

See Jesus leading His own forth from the city, and contemplate Him in spirit as He ascends into heaven.

HE LED THEM OUT OF JERUSALEM.

Note that only to His disciples was He visible. No enemy saw Him leading them. Yet He was in their midst.

So now He ever leads His own: "When He hath let out His own sheep, He goeth before them."

He often leads us—for our greater good—whither naturally we shrink from going. Love will impel us to follow Him.

A CLOUD RECEIVED HIM OUT OF THEIR SIGHT.

So now "clouds" willed by Him conceal Him from us; e.g.,

Sorrows, bereavements, trials, temptations, anxieties, spiritual desolation.

The Eucharistic veils.

Our superiors, who guide us in His name and by His authority.

THE ANGELS ASK: “WHY STAND YOU
LOOKING UP TO HEAVEN?”

Were the question put to us, we could re-
ply:

Because there is the throne of Our Lord,
where He sits in glory.

There, too, are our friends and brethren—
the saints of God and our Mother.

There is our treasure; there are our hearts
and thither are our eyes directed.

Never must our conduct justify the nega-
tive form of this question.

THE DISCIPLES WENT BACK “ADORING” AND
FILLED “WITH GREAT JOY.”

They had indeed entered into the joy of
their Lord.

They rejoiced for His sake: though they
went back to face toil and dangers, it was
for their Lord.

The Christian—whatever be his trials—can
always “rejoice in the Lord,” in the
thought that his loved Master can never
suffer again.

APPLICATION:

Whatever sorrows oppress us, joy reigns in
heaven.

We shall one day enter that blessed realm.

In heaven Jesus ever intercedes for us.

Hence, in dark or bright days, “*Sursum
corda.*”

74. EARTH AND HEAVEN—A CONTRAST

“*These that are clothed in white robes, who are they? And whence came they? . . . These are they who are come out of great tribulation and have washed their robes . . . in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, they are before the throne of God, and they serve Him day and night in His temple. . . . They shall no more hunger nor thirst; neither shall the sun fall on them, nor any heat . . . and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.*” (Apoc. vii. 13–17.)

INTRODUCTION:

St. John, of all the sacred writers, gives the most vivid descriptions of “the things to come, hereafter.” Contrast earth and heaven. What an abyss separates them!

LOOK AROUND UPON THE WORLD.

Men suffer in their *bodies*—from physical necessities—from diseases.

Men suffer *morally*—anxieties, fears, suspense, oppressions, crimes, etc.

Men suffer in their *affections*—ingratitude, neglect, dishonor, bereavements.

Men suffer in their *souls*—remorse, temptations, spiritual trials.

All this weight of sorrows and pains is the result of sin, still it can be utilized for our sanctification and salvation.

LOOK UP TO HEAVEN.

There men's senses have their lawful and fullest satisfaction.

God, like a tender mother, wipes away "all tears from their eyes" by removing the causes of sorrow.

The saints serve God day and night, and find their eternal happiness in adoring Him.

Their joy no man shall ever take from them.

HOW DO THE SAINTS IN HEAVEN LOOK BACK UPON THE TRIBULATIONS OF EARTH?

As the means by which they attained to eternal life, through the grace of God.

With gratitude (in so far as these tribulations were not due to their own sins) since God has so generously rewarded them for their sufferings.

With gladness, inasmuch as these trials helped them to prove their love and to walk in the footsteps of their Crucified Saviour.

With a realization of their transitoriness.

APPLICATION:

We should learn to look upon our trials *now*, as we shall look back upon them hereafter.

Faith enables us to appreciate them at their true value (even as the saints did), though it does not dispense us from feeling the weight of the cross when it bears us down.

75. JESUS' GIFTS TO MEN

"The chariot of God is attended by ten thousands; thousands of them that rejoice. The Lord is among them in Sina, in the holy place. Thou hast ascended on high; Thou hast led captivity captive; Thou hast received gifts in men." (Ps. lxxvii.18.)

INTRODUCTION :

Thus David predicted the ascension of King Messias. Angels accompanied Him and adored Him enthroned in heaven as the "Son of man." There He received from His Heavenly Father gifts for men. What are these gifts?

THE GIFT OF GRACE, BOTH SANCTIFYING AND ACTUAL.

These graces are a free gift of God.

They come to us *directly* through the sacraments; *indirectly* by the action of God on the soul.

They are given as we need them.

By our fidelity we can merit more graces.

THE GIFT OF PEACE.

This "passeth all understanding."

It follows from man's being reconciled to God.

Christ teaches us the things that are to our peace, when He visits our souls.

Sin alone can rob the Christian soul of this precious gift.

THE GIFT OF JOY.

The Christian rejoices in his Lord's victory over death.

He looks forward to his own glorious resurrection.

He ever rejoices in spirit, even in this valley of tears.

THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

It was expedient that Jesus should ascend, otherwise the Spirit would not have been given in all His fulness.

By the Holy Spirit we are sanctified.

THE GIFT OF HEAVEN.

By overcoming death, Jesus opened heaven to the faithful.

He prepares "a mansion" there for us, and us for that mansion.

The thought of heaven cheers us along life's highway.

It should render "our conversation" (i.e., our lives) spiritual, as befits a future citizen of heaven.

APPLICATION:

Let us "be zealous for these best gifts."

Ever utilize these precious gifts.

Beware lest we lose them.

Thank our Risen Saviour for these "unspeakable" gifts.

76. OUR GIFTS TO GOD

“Providing good things, not only in the sight of God, but also in the sight of all men.”
(Rom. xii. 17.)

INTRODUCTION:

God showers His choicest gifts upon us: Jesus, having ascended, “received gifts for men.” What return does He expect of us?

GOD—FROM HIS THRONE IN HEAVEN—REJOICES IN THE VIRTUES OF HIS CHILDREN.

Thus we read in the Scriptures:

“My delights are to be with the children of men.” (Prov. viii. 31.)

“Blessed be the Lord thy God, whom thou hast pleased.” (3 Kings x. 9.)

“They that deal faithfully please Him.” (Prov. xii. 22.)

Christians are God’s “special possessions” or “treasures.” (Mal. iii. 17.)

God took pleasure in holy Job’s fidelity: “Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a simple and upright man, and fearing God, and avoiding evil?” (Job i. 8.)

The eight Beatitudes teach the same truth.

WE MUST “PROVIDE GOOD THINGS” IN HIS SIGHT.

These consist in

Purity of intention, like holy Job.

Obedience, like Abraham.

Generosity, like the poor widow in the temple.

Humility, like the publican in the temple.

Courage, like the martyrs and confessors in all ages.

Zeal, like the apostles.

Purity, like our Blessed Lady.

Charity, like all God's saints.

GOOD THINGS IN THE SIGHT OF MEN.

This inevitably follows if we provide good things before God.

It is by serving our neighbor that we prove our love for God.

APPLICATION:

Not to offer to God that which costs us nothing.

To offer our gifts generously and cheerfully.

Never to take back what we have given to God.

77. "ABLE TO SUCCOR"

"Wherein He Himself hath suffered and been tempted He is able to succor them also that are tempted." (Heb. ii. 18.) "For we have not a high priest who can not have compassion on our infirmities; but one tempted in all things like as we are, without sin." (Ibid. iv. 15.)

INTRODUCTION:

Contrast the two scenes: Jesus, in His humility, submitting to be tempted by the devil. Jesus, our High Priest, interceding for us in the Holy of holies, the heavenly Jerusalem.

JESUS, OUR HIGH PRIEST, HAS ENTERED HEAVEN AS OUR ADVOCATE.

He entered not with the blood of animals, but with His own precious blood shed for us.

His ministry is eternal. He ever pleads our cause.

He knows each of His own, the force and number of their temptations.

He bears our names engraved upon His hands.

OUR HIGH PRIEST IS "MERCIFUL."

Because made like unto us in all things, which includes passions, feelings, human longings.

Because "He hath suffered, being tempted."

OUR HIGH PRIEST IS FAITHFUL, hence

His love never changes.

His patience never fails.

His intercession ever prevails.

He never permits the temptation to exceed our strength, but ever makes “with temptation issue,” that we “may be able to bear it.” (1 Cor. x. 13.)

IT IS THEREFORE OUR DUTY:

To “hold fast our confession” (sc. of faith).

To go “with confidence to the throne of grace.”

When we are tempted.

When we are discouraged.

When we are desolate.

To pray earnestly “for mercy and grace in seasonable aid.”

To trust our High Priest in our darkest hours.

Even to rejoice when tempted, knowing that God allows temptation to overtake us that we may win our crown of glory and show ourselves to be His faithful servants.

WHITSUN SUBJECTS

78. THE PERSON AND THE WORK OF THE HOLY GHOST

“Receive ye the Holy Ghost.” (John xx. 22.) *“They were all filled with the Holy Ghost.”* (Acts ii. 4.)

INTRODUCTION:

Contrast the three scenes which took place in the Cenacle.

Jesus before His passion promising to send the Paraclete.

Jesus after His Resurrection giving His apostles the first fruits of the Spirit.

Jesus after His Ascension sending the Holy Ghost upon His disciples.

WHO IS THE HOLY GHOST?

The Third Person of the Blessed Trinity.
Therefore equal to the Father and the Son.

WORK OF THE HOLY GHOST.

In the Catholic Church.

To bring to the apostles' minds the words and doctrine of Christ.

To reveal Christ to the Church, and thus glorify the Son.

To abide in the Church in all ages.

To intercede for the Church.

In the Christian Soul.

To sanctify it more and more.

To guide it in the paths of virtue.

To enlighten that soul in spiritual things.

To dwell in the soul as in His temple.

To comfort and sustain the soul.

To pray *in, with,* and *for* the Christian soul.

Toward Sinners.

To convince them of sin, justice, and judgment.

OUR DUTIES TOWARD THE HOLY GHOST.

Never to "grieve," "quench," or "resist" the Spirit.

To pray for His guidance.

To keep our souls pure because they are His temples.

To obey His inspirations.

APPLICATION:

Pray for and cultivate a devotion to the Holy Spirit, by whom we are "sealed unto Salvation."

79. THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY GHOST—I

“The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him; the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and of godliness . . . and the fear of the Lord.” (Is. xi. 2, 3.)

INTRODUCTION:

The prophet thus describes how the Spirit of the Lord would rest upon Our Blessed Lord. This same Spirit communicates these gifts to men. Like all other spiritual gifts and graces, they have been purchased for us by the precious blood.

EXCELLENCE OF THESE GIFTS.

They perfect the whole of man's being
 By enlightening his intelligence.
 By sanctifying his soul.
 By uniting his will to that of God.

FOUR GIFTS ENLIGHTEN THE SOUL.

Wisdom, which is “better than gold.”
 (Prov. xvi. 16.)

Based on the “fear of the Lord.” (Ibid.
 i. 7.)

The perfection of all the other gifts.
 It enables the soul
 To relish eternal truths.
 To seek first the kingdom of God.

Understanding, which enables the soul to understand the hidden things of God as revealed to the Church

By the Scriptures.

By the direct action of the Holy Spirit.

Counsel enlightens the soul as to what is expedient

For its spiritual interests.

For the interests of the Church.

Checks man's natural impulsiveness.

Knowledge "is a fountain of life to him that possesseth it." (Prov. xvi. 22.)

It helps us to use the things of earth in view of our salvation.

It reveals to us the obligations of our Faith.

It removes vain fears, doubts, and ignorance.

It helps us to know God's will.

APPLICATION:

We should "be zealous" for these better gifts, and pray earnestly for them.

We have a right or "title" to them in virtue of our Confirmation.

These gifts can be perfected by prayer and study.

80. THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY GHOST—II

“*Labor as a good soldier of Christ.*” (2 Tim. ii. 3.) “*Godliness is profitable to all things.*” (1 Tim. iv. 8.) “*The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom.*” (Job xxviii. 98.)

INTRODUCTION:

In these passages, we have allusions to the three gifts of the Spirit—*Fortitude, Piety,* and *Fear of the Lord*—which contribute to the healing of those wounds of the soul which are the consequences of the fall of man. These gifts are necessary for salvation.

FORTITUDE.

This helps the Christian to endure hardships for Christ’s sake; e.g.,

To bear sufferings, moral, physical, and spiritual.

To profess his faith before the world.

To control his sinful inclinations and passions.

To persevere in the practice of virtue.

This gift of fortitude was

Practised by the confessors and martyrs.

Practised by Jesus during His passion.

We need it when tempted by the devil and at the hour of death.

This gift is bestowed upon us in a special manner by the sacrament of Confirmation.

PIETY.

This enables us to serve God with devotion and pleasure.

By it we practise our religion more easily.

By it we have a real love for supernatural things.

By it we become zealous for God's honor.

By it we bear patiently with our neighbors' faults for God's sake.

FEAR OF THE LORD.

This filial fear keeps us from sin.

Further, it enables us

To overcome human respect.

To keep our true place as creatures, dependent upon God.

To watch and pray lest we fall into sin.

To stand in awe of God's judgments.

APPLICATION:

We should carefully treasure these gifts of the Spirit, because

They are necessary for salvation, since we are told that

“God loveth none but him that dwelleth with wisdom.” (Wis. vii. 28.)

“He that is without fear can not be justified.” (Eccles. i. 28.)

They make us pleasing to God.

They enable us to imitate Our Blessed Lord.

81. LIVING TEMPLES OF THE HOLY
GHOST

“He spoke of the temple of His body.”
(John ii. 21.) *“Know you not that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. But if any man violate the temple of God, him shall God destroy. For the temple of God is holy, which you are.”* (1 Cor. iii. 16, 17.)

INTRODUCTION:

By the infusion of sanctifying grace in Baptism God dwells in the soul, which thus becomes His earthly temple.

CONSIDER THE BUILDING OF SOLOMON'S TEM-
PLE.

A free-will offering of the Jews to God.
The plan and every detail given by God,
who gave special skill to the “artificers.”
Stones hewn and sculptured in the quarries,
that no noise might be heard in the
building of the temple.

Destined to be

A house of prayer.

A place of sacrifice.

A dwelling-place for Jehovah.

God, by a visible sign of His presence (when His glory filled the house of the Lord), took possession of His sanctuary, glad to dwell in the midst of His people.

**THE CHRISTIAN SOUL IS GOD'S LIVING TEM-
PLE.**

Founded on faith.

Built up by religious instruction.

Cemented by charity.

Beautified by the practice of virtues.

Dedicated in Baptism.

Sealed in Confirmation.

The dwelling-place of the Divinity.

By sanctifying grace.

By the Holy Eucharist.

Offered freely to God.

God loves to dwell therein.

When defiled by sin, it is purified by repent-
ance and the sacrament of Penance.

**EACH CHRISTIAN SOUL IS "A LIVING STONE"
DESTINED FOR THE HEAVENLY TEMPLE.**

It is hewn from earth's quarries.

It is prepared for its place there by

God's grace and man's co-operation.

The practice of virtue and tribulations.

It is more perfectly purified in purgatory,
whence it is transferred to its place in
heaven.

APPLICATION:

Render to God a service of praise and sacri-
fice in the temple of the soul, His dwell-
ing-place.

82. LIVING SACRIFICES

"I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercy of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing unto God, your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be reformed in the newness of your mind." (Rom. xii. 1, 2.)

INTRODUCTION:

Sacrifice is the central act of worship. By it we recognize our dependence upon God. Prescriptions concerning the qualifications and preparation of the victims were given by God Himself to Moses.

"PRESENT YOUR BODIES A LIVING SACRIFICE."

By labor, endurance of suffering and hardships.

Holy, pleasing to God by purity of soul and body.

"Our reasonable service," since we
Are God's creatures.

Redeemed by the precious blood.

They should be *presented*, because God asks for the free-will service of His children.

Like the sacrifices in the temple, our offering should be offered daily to God.

Thus we justify our right to the title—"a holy priesthood."

"BE NOT CONFORMED TO THIS WORLD."

This involves living as "strangers and pil-

grims" upon earth, hence the Christian must not cling to earthly things, such as beauty, fame, success, riches, pleasures, human opinion—in a word, all the things which the world esteems and seeks.

"BE RENEWED IN THE NEWNESS OF YOUR MIND."

This involves

Looking upon earth and all it offers from the standpoint of eternity.

Being "fervent in spirit, serving the Lord."

Giving God generously whatever He asks.

Presenting, in addition, our free-will offerings.

APPLICATION:

We must resolve never to suffer any "rapine" in our holocausts and be willing to offer to our God that which costs us something.

The "mercy of God" merits our whole-hearted service. How much we have received from Him! How little we can offer in return!

THE BLESSED TRINITY

83. ON THE BLESSED TRINITY

“Blessed be the Holy and Undivided Trinity, now and for ever.”

INTRODUCTION :

Throughout eternity, the redeemed will celebrate the grandeurs of the Blessed Trinity. The whole Church Triumphant—saints and angels—sing their *Trisagion* “to Him that sitteth upon the throne.”

THE FAITHFUL ARE CHILDREN OF GOD.

Therefore they are bound to honor their Heavenly Father by
Reverencing His Holy Name.
Adoring His Divine Majesty.
Obeying His commands promptly and constantly.
Believing His word as revealed by the Scriptures and the Church.
Hoping firmly in Him.
Loving Him before all and above all.

THE FAITHFUL HAVE BEEN RANSOMED BY THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST.

What are their duties toward their Redeemer?
Gratitude for all His love.
Self-oblation, as befits those “purchased at a great price.”

Horror of sin, since sin caused His death.
Loyalty to His cause.
Courage to confess Him before men.
Zeal to make Him known.
Devotion to the passion and to the Holy
Eucharist.
Love, which comprises all else.

THE FAITHFUL ARE SANCTIFIED BY THE
HOLY SPIRIT.

Hence it behooves them to honor Him
By fidelity to grace.
By a real desire of holiness.
By a love of purity, for they are His tem-
ples.
By loving intercourse with Him, invoking
Him
In their efforts to attain virtue.
In their temptations.
By counting upon His intercession.
By trusting in His guidance. "He will
teach you all truth." (John xvi. 13.)

APPLICATION:

Honor the Three Persons of the Blessed
Trinity by worshiping and serving Them
with the three powers of our soul.
Recite the Doxologies frequently and rev-
erently.

84. THE WORSHIP OF GOD

"Thou shalt adore the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." (Luke iv. 8.)

INTRODUCTION:

Contemplate the wonderful scene of the dedication of Solomon's temple when, Solomon having "made an end of his prayer, fire came down from heaven, and consumed the holocausts and the victims. And the majesty of the Lord filled the house. Neither could the priests enter into the temple of the Lord, because the majesty of the Lord had filled the temple." Then the people, seeing the fire and the glory of the Lord coming down, prostrated themselves "upon the stone pavement, they adored and praised the Lord . . . because His mercy endureth for ever." (2 Paral. vii. 1-3.)

IN WHAT THE WORSHIP OF GOD CONSISTS:

- In praising Him.
- In honoring Him.
- In making His name known.
- In serving Him.

GOD CREATED MAN FOR HIS GLORY.

"I have created him for My glory; I have formed him and made him." (Is. xliii. 7.)
 Man must worship God with the three powers of his soul and render Him exterior homage, likewise because he is God's crea-

ture and in obedience to God's precept, "Thou shalt worship," etc.

He will—if redeemed—praise God forever in heaven: such is the noble end of man. Jesus, our Model, glorified His Father upon earth. (John xvii. 1.)

**THE CHURCH MILITANT CONTINUALLY GLO-
RIFIES GOD.**

By the holy sacrifice of the Mass.

By her daily Office, especially "Lauds."

By her liturgical prayers.

By "the eminent holiness" of some of her children.

**SIN ROBS GOD OF HIS GLORY BY ATTACKING
HIS INFINITE PERFECTIONS; E.G.,**

Hatred attacks His love.

Harshness attacks His mercy and compassion.

Anger attacks His patience.

Sloth attacks His divine activity.

Lying attacks His truth.

Pride attacks His majesty.

Disobedience attacks His divine paternity.

APPLICATION:

St. Paul sums up man's duties to God in these pregnant words: "Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all for the glory of God. Be without offence . . . to the Church of God." (1 Cor. x. 31, 32.)

85. GOD'S LOVE FOR MAN

"They shall know that I have loved thee."
(Apoc. iii. 9.)

INTRODUCTION:

God gives men continual proofs of His love for them. He has created them to His image and likeness and at each instant sustains them in life. God the Son redeemed them "at a great price." He ever intercedes for them in heaven. God the Holy Ghost sanctifies them, thus enabling them to profit by Jesus' Redemption.

"THEY SHALL KNOW THAT I HAVE LOVED THEE."

"They" includes

The world that despises and persecutes the disciples of Jesus Christ.

The enemies who procured the crown of martyrdom for so many.

The devils who strive to compass men's ruin.

How the world, the persecutors, and the devils will be confounded on seeing what great rewards they indirectly were the means of procuring for the saints (no persecutors, no martyrs)! One object of the General Judgment will be to prove to the world that God has loved His elect.

GOD LOVES US BECAUSE

On His part

Of His infinite goodness.

We are made to His image.

We are His adopted children.

On our part, He wills to find motives; e.g.,

“Thou hast a little strength.”

“Thou hast kept My word.”

“Thou hast not denied My name.”

“Thou hast kept the word of My patience.”

Above all, we are purchased by the precious blood.

Our very need, likewise, appeals to His loving compassion.

WE MUST RENDER HIM LOVE FOR LOVE.

It is the only adequate return we can make.

Love alone will satisfy our God, who “is love.”

Love alone gives true peace and happiness upon earth.

Love of God constitutes the bliss of heaven.

APPLICATION:

Love is proved by deeds. We must let the world know, by the holiness of our lives, that we are striving to requite God for His love of us.

86. "WORTHY OF GOD"

"That you may walk worthy of God, in all things pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God." (Col. i. 10.)

INTRODUCTION :

How far beyond man's power to "walk worthy of God," but for the abundant grace given to all who seriously try to put this precept of the Apostle in practice. After all, it but re-echoes that of Our Lord: "Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect." (Matt. v. 48.)

"IN ALL THINGS PLEASING" TO GOD.

We attain to this by
 Doing always what pleases God in imitation of Our Lord.
 Avoiding all sin, especially mortal sin.

FRUITFUL IN EVERY GOOD WORK.

Thus we become true disciples. Cf. "In this is My Father glorified, that you bring forth very much fruit and become My disciples." (John xv. 8.)

"Good work" embraces
 Prayer, both public and private.
 Fasting, which includes all acts of penance whether enjoined or voluntary.

Alms-deeds, which covers all acts of charity, spiritual or corporal (as given in the “corporal” and “spiritual” works of mercy).

INCREASING IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

By hearing sermons and instructions.

By spiritual reading, e.g.,

Devotional works.

Lives of saints.

By meditating on the mysteries of our faith.

By thirsting for spiritual knowledge, to which “the kingdom of heaven” is promised hereafter.

APPLICATION:

Lest the vastness of the precept, “Walk worthy of God,” overwhelm us, we must bear in mind that, in practice, it means *diligently performing the duty which each moment brings.*

God always gives the grace necessary to assist us in performing this duty of the moment, whatever it be. As our “*day,*” so will be our *strength.*

THE BLESSED EUCHARIST

87. THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

“Take ye and eat. This is My body.”
“Behold I am with you all days, even to the
consummation of the world.” (Matt. xxvi.
26; xxviii. 20.)

INTRODUCTION:

Contemplate that sublime scene in the Cenacle on Maundy Thursday, when Jesus, the Bread of Life, fulfilled His promise to the disciples, and gave them His flesh to eat and His blood to drink. Then, that He might be with His Church “even to the consummation of the world,” He gave them power to offer this holy sacrifice of the Mass.

THE BLESSED SACRAMENT IS THE CENTRAL DEVOTION OF THE CHURCH.

Thus, in its honor, she has various practices of devotion.

First and foremost, holy Mass, offered in obedience to Our Lord’s command:
“Do this for a commemoration of Me.”

Benediction and Exposition.

The practice of private visits to the Blessed Sacrament, to encourage which she keeps her churches open daily.

Processions and guilds in honor of the Blessed Sacrament.

Religious Congregations, whose members’ chief occupation is to adore Our Lord under the Eucharistic species.

She obliges her children to receive holy communion once a year and exhorts them to receive it frequently, even daily.

DISPOSITIONS WHICH BEFIT THE CHRISTIAN
WHEN ADORING THE HOLY EUCHARIST:

Firm faith. Jesus, the Eternal Truth, has said, "This is My body."

Hope in Our Lord's infinite power, and fidelity to His promises: "He that eateth this bread shall live forever."

Charity, proved by obedience to His will in all things.

Reverence, interior and exterior.

Purity of soul, seeing that by holy communion Jesus Himself takes up His abode in our souls.

Humility, for we are not worthy that He should come under our roof, as the Church reminds us.

Desire. "As the hart panteth after the fountains of water, so my soul panteth after Thee, O God." (Ps. xli. 1.)

APPLICATION:

Re-animate our devotion toward Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament.

Take pains to prepare carefully for our communions.

Thank Our Lord for this Gift of gifts—this gage of everlasting life.

88. THE EFFECTS OF HOLY COMMUNION

“As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me.” (John vi. 58.)
“Thou comest to Me, that thou mayest be sanctified by Me, that thou mayest receive fresh graces, and be stirred up to amendment of life.” (Imit., Bk. iv. 12.)

INTRODUCTION:

Man grows physically and mentally until he arrives at maturity. So in the supernatural life there should be continual growth. The body and blood of Our Lord, received in the Holy Eucharist, is the great means of spiritual growth. Without it the soul has no life. Consider the marvelous effects of receiving holy communion worthily.

WE COMMUNICATE THAT WE MAY BE SANCTIFIED.

This consists in an increase of sanctifying grace and in the communication of sacramental grace.

Sanctification is one of the ends of our creation; it is the condition of our salvation.

This sanctification—like physical growth—is effected precisely because we have been nourished spiritually. This growth does not fall under the senses.

In proportion as we increase in sanctification, we become more pleasing to God.

WE COMMUNICATE THAT WE MAY BE UNITED TO OUR LORD.

This blessed union
Satisfies the desire of Our Lord.
Satisfies the needs of the soul.
Gives happiness even upon earth.
Is a preparation for eternity.
Is a source of strength.

WE COMMUNICATE THAT WE MAY RECEIVE FRESH GRACE.

Actual graces adapted to present needs.
Sometimes spiritual consolation is given.
Each communion received with fitting disposition brings some special gift.

WE COMMUNICATE THAT WE MAY BE STIRRED UP TO FRESH FERVOR.

Greater determination to belong wholly to our God.
Generosity to give Him whatever he asks of us.
Courage to bear our daily cross patiently.
Zeal to make Our Lord more known.
This fervor exists in the *will*, and is compatible with a state of spiritual aridity.
It is independent of and above mere sentiments of emotion.

APPLICATION:

To strive to profit by our communions.
To show our gratitude to our Eucharistic Lord by serving Him faithfully.

THE BLESSED VIRGIN

89. THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION—I

“Tota pulchra es, Maria, et macula originalis non est in te. Alleluia.”

INTRODUCTION:

Note the prayer of the Church for this feast (Dec. 8): “O God, who by the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin didst make ready a fitting dwelling-place for Thy Son, grant, we beseech Thee, that as through the death—foreseen by Thee—of the same Thy Son, Thou didst preserve His Mother unsullied by sin, so make us likewise come unto Thee pure in soul.”

Mary’s *purity* and *greatness* are the two themes of the liturgy of this blessed feast.

GOD PREDESTINED MARY TO BE:

The second Eve, the sinless Mother of men.
The Mother of the Incarnate Word.
The one creature who should fully realize
His design.

Hence, her Immaculate Conception, due to the merits of the death of Jesus, “foreseen by God.”

OUR DEAR LADY’S GREATNESS.

Her purity of soul the source of
Her life of union with God.
Her constant growth in holiness.
Her co-operation in the Redemption.

Her fortitude in suffering—"Queen of Martyrs."

The efficacy of her intercession.

Her glory in heaven to-day—forever (which glory we hope to gaze upon).

OUR DUTIES TOWARD OUR IMMACULATE MOTHER.

Keep our souls pure by

Taking due precautions.

Combating valiantly.

Making acts of love and contrition.

Help others to preserve their purity by

Prudent counsels.

Judicious efforts.

Earnest prayer.

(More particularly as regards those entrusted to our care.)

Make her known and loved.

By word.

By example.

By zeal for her honor.

APPLICATION:

Pray earnestly for perfect purity of soul and body.

Invoke Our Lady when tempted against purity.

Rejoice in her greatness, in the joy she gives to God.

90. THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION—II

“I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, and my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, and with the robe of justice; He hath covered me . . . as a bride adorned with her jewels.”

INTRODUCTION:

The Church applies these prophetic words to Our Blessed Lady. Contrast the conception of the sinful children of Eve in all ages with that of Mary. She stands alone—the one sinless child—the ideal child, as each child of earth would have been, but for the Fall. God and His holy angels could look upon her with delight. From the first moment of her existence, she possessed that perfect purity which is the passport for heaven.

MARY—IN ALL HUMILITY—KNEW AND REALIZED HER PRIVILEGES.

She rejoiced in God her Saviour, knowing that in His infinite goodness He had
Clothed her with the garments of salvation; i.e., with sanctifying grace and the infusion of the theological virtues.

Clothed her with a robe of justice by her acquisition of all virtues.

Adorned her as an oriental bride, with the precious jewels of her many privileges of which her Immaculate Conception is the first.

WE, TOO, HAVE MOTIVES FOR REJOICING IN THE LORD, NOT ONLY ON THIS FEAST, BUT AT ALL TIMES.

We should rejoice for Mary's sake, and congratulate her on her dignity and privileges.

We can rejoice for our own sakes, in that
Our race has been so ennobled.

We possess such a Mother, who pleads for us with God, and can sympathize with, and assist us in all our needs.

We have her glorious example of all virtues.

In our lesser degree we, too, have been
Clothed with the garments of salvation
by Holy Baptism.

Covered with a robe of justice, in so far as we have acquired certain virtues by God's help.

Granted many precious favors as most dear children of God and of the Church.

APPLICATION :

Let us ever live in the spirit of the *Magnificat*.

Honor Our Blessed Lady by our words and deeds.

Attribute to God alone all that He has given us.

Value our precious inheritance as Catholics.

91. THE NATIVITY OF OUR LADY ¹

"I will put enmities between thee and the woman . . . she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel." (Gen. iii. 15.)
"Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son; and His name shall be called Emmanuel." (Is. vii. 14.)

INTRODUCTION :

Contemplate Mary in her swaddling bands, cradled in the arms of St. Anne. Angels watch over her who is to be their Queen. God the Father contemplates the work of His hands and pronounces it "good." God the Son looks upon the human being of whom He will take flesh. God the Holy Ghost rejoices in that human soul which will ever be His temple.

THE GREATNESS OF MARY "THE WOMAN":

Promised by God to the human race.

Predicted by the prophets.

Foreshadowed by the types of the Old Law.

Destined to become the living tabernacle of the Word of God.

Waited for throughout long ages by God's people.

¹ This feast has been solemnized from the earliest ages both in the Eastern and the Western Church. St. John the Baptist was sanctified in his mother's womb and Our Lady was conceived without sin. Hence, of these only, among her saints, are the birthdays kept as religious festivals. Most saints' days are kept on the day of their decease.

Destined to be the second Eve, the Mother of all Christians.

Excelling in dignity every other human being.

HOW HIDDEN HER DESTINY!

It was unknown to her parents.

No angels heralded her entrance into the world.

Men knew not that the Mother of the Redeemer had been born.

Satan did not know that the one whose seed was to crush his head lay in St. Anne's arms.

Her exterior life was so hidden and simple.

Thus in silence and secrecy God accomplishes His mighty ends.

FROM MARY'S BIRTH WE MAY LEARN:

Though God tarry, He will surely accomplish His designs of love and fulfil His promises to men.

By Mary's birth, God already began to answer the prayers of His people for the speedy advent of the Redeemer, yet they knew it not. So with us, often He is answering our prayers, though we perceive it not. We must learn to trust Him.

God has a special work in the world for every soul He creates. Be it ours to discover that work and to perform it faithfully.

92. THE FEAST OF THE MOST HOLY NAME
OF MARY¹

“He calleth His own sheep by name and leadeth them out.” (John x. 3.)

INTRODUCTION:

Our name distinguishes us from our fellows. God both gave His servants special names (e.g., Moses, St. John the Baptist) and changed their names (e.g., Abraham, Sarah—from Abram, Sarai.—Gen. xvii. 5, 15) to set forth their mission. The Good Shepherd knows each of His sheep by name even as He called St. Mary Magdalen and St. Thomas by name.

POWER OF A NAME.

To encourage to combat (Napoleon).
To keep pure (“Mother”).
To arouse aversion (Judas).

THE NAME OF MARY SIGNIFIES:

Bitterness: Trace the course of her sorrows.

A Sea: Note her boundless charity, her purity, humility, constancy, etc.

¹This feast, originally confined to some of the Western Churches, was extended to the whole Church by Innocent XI as an annual act of thanksgiving for the delivery of Vienna besieged by the Turks (Sept. 12, 1683) and for the final defeat of the Turks, who, for several centuries, had endeavored to overrun Christian Europe.

WE, TOO, HAVE A NAME SOLEMNLY CON-
FERRED IN BAPTISM.

Personal

It is that of some saint.

It is "written in heaven"—as long as we
are faithful.

It is known to God: "Behold I have
graven thee in My hands." (Is. xlix.
16.)

Generic

Generic Child of God.

Christian.

Catholic.

Child of Mary.

APPLICATION:

Invoke the name of Mary when tempted,
sorrowful, or in need.

Be worthy of the sacred names you bear.

Rejoice in that your names are written in
heaven, more than in any temporal gain.

93. THE PRESENTATION OF OUR LADY
IN THE TEMPLE

“Son, give Me thy heart; and let thy eyes keep My ways.” (Prov. xxiii. 26.) *“We shall go into the house of the Lord.”* (Ps. cxxi. 1.) *“I have loved, O Lord, the beauty of Thy house, and the place where Thy glory dwelleth.”* (Ps. xxv. 8.)

INTRODUCTION:

We belong wholly to God, yet He deigns to say: *“Give Me thy heart.”* Mary, as a child, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, heard the call of God and gladly went to dwell in the house of the Lord. Consider her as she served her Lord with her hands, and worshiped Him in His earthly temple and in her own soul, for she was the living temple of the Holy Ghost.

MARY GAVE HERSELF WHOLLY TO GOD
EARLY.

Without hesitation.

Without delay.

Without reserve—hers was no *partial* sacrifice.

Without the least regret.

MARY GAVE HERSELF GENEROUSLY.

Sacrificing home comforts and joys.

Sacrificing the society of her parents.

Sacrificing even the possibility of being a mother—the Jewish maiden's great ambition—by her vow of virginity.

MARY GAVE HERSELF CONSTANTLY.

She never looked back.

She continued her life of consecration to God even when she returned to her home. Her sacrifice only ended with her life.

APPLICATION :

We are all called to follow Our Lord in the path of sacrifice, at least that required for the observance of God's commandments. Some are called to the higher path of the Evangelical Counsels, and blessed are they who hear and obey promptly and generously.

We are destined—when our life's pilgrimage is over—to be presented to God in the heavenly temple.

Collect for this Feast:

“O God, who wast pleased that on this day the Blessed Mary, ever a virgin, should be presented in the temple of Jerusalem; we beseech Thee let her prayers obtain from Thee that we one day be found worthy to be presented in the temple of Thy glory. Amen.”

94. THE ANNUNCIATION

“The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary, and she conceived by the Holy Ghost.”

INTRODUCTION :

Thus the Church thrice daily reminds her children of the marvelous mystery of the Incarnation. The fulness of time had come and the human instrument chosen by God—the Immaculate Virgin—had been duly prepared for her stupendous mission. Then God fulfilled His promises and, “while all things were in quiet silence, and the night was in the midst of her course, Thy Almighty Word leapt down from heaven from Thy royal throne.” (Wis. xviii. 14.) “The Word was made flesh,” and Mary became the Mother of God.

CONSIDER THE APPARITION OF THE ANGEL.

His obedience to God.

His respect for Mary.

His humility in saluting her.

His joy at being sent on such a mission to a fallen race.

CONTEMPLATE THE LOWLY VIRGIN.

Her recollection in prayer.

Her astonishment and perplexity.

Her prompt acceptation of God’s holy will.

Her ecstatic joy and adoring love.

CONSIDER OUR LORD'S COMING.

He takes the first great step toward the Redemption: Afterward Our God "was seen upon earth and conversed with men." (Bar. iii. 38.) Now, only Mary knows of His Advent.

How gladly He came to fulfil the prophecies and to accomplish God's will!

How He rejoiced to find one pure soul, on whom He could pour out His choicest graces!

How His abasement astonished the angels of God!

APPLICATION:

Special devotion to the Incarnation by the devout recital of the Angelus and of the Nicene Creed.

Ask Our Lady to help us to prepare for His coming under the Eucharistic species.

Gratitude that to us it is given to know those mysteries of the Gospel, which the prophets understood not, even when predicting them.

Cf. "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and diligently searched, who prophesied of the grace to come in you. Searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ in them did signify when it foretold those sufferings that are in Christ, and the glories that should follow." (1 Pet. i. 10, 11.)

95. THE FEAST OF THE VISITATION ¹

“Mary, rising up in those days, went into the hill country with haste into a city of Juda. And she entered into the house of Zachary and saluted Elizabeth.” (Luke i. 39.)

INTRODUCTION:

“In those days”—those blessed days which followed the Annunciation—Mary hastened to greet and congratulate her cousin St. Elizabeth. And, wherever Mary went, she bore Jesus: exterior action did not interrupt her prayer.

THE LITTLE HOME IN NAZARETH AFTER THE
INCARNATION OF THE WORD.

Mary's ecstasy of joy and love.

Joseph's wonder and gratitude.

Jesus' joy at having commenced the work of our Redemption.

NOW TURN TO THE HOME OF ZACHARY AFTER
HIS VISION.

Elizabeth overwhelmed with joy.

Zachary silent and full of gratitude for God's goodness to him.

The marvels predicted of his son.

¹ This feast, although it can be traced back to the thirteenth century, became obligatory on the whole Church only in the fifteenth.

DWELL UPON THE JOURNEY OF MARY AND
JOSEPH TO HEBRON.

Their modesty and simplicity.
Their haste to bring joy to their kinsmen.
Their thoughts and conversation—all centred in God and His holy will.

CONTEMPLATE THE MEETING

Of Mary and Elizabeth.

Consider their greeting, the work of the Holy Ghost in them, and in St. John—as yet unborn. Mary's joy finds expression in her sublime canticle, "My soul doth magnify the Lord."

Of Joseph and Zachary.

How much they had in common. Both had seen a vision of an angel and had had their faith tried by God.

Of the Precursor and his Lord.

The former thereby sanctified.

APPLICATION:

From this mystery we learn lessons of
Humility—to give God His glory.
Charity—to be ready to serve others.
Zeal—for the sanctification of our neighbors.

96. MARY'S JOYS AND SORROWS AT
BETHLEHEM

“She brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him up in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.” (Luke ii. 7.)

INTRODUCTION:

Contemplate the lowly grotto; there the Mother of God and St. Joseph worship the Divine Infant. Adoring angels are invisibly present. “When He bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, He saith: Let all the angels of God worship Him.” (Heb. i. 6.)

MARY'S JOYS IN BETHLEHEM.

- To gaze upon the Divine Infant with adoring love.
- To minister to His needs.
- To see the shepherds and the Magi come to pay Him homage.
- To share in the humiliations and sufferings of her Child.
- To know that the world's Redeemer had appeared amongst men and that the longed-for redemption would speedily be accomplished.

MARY'S SORROWS IN BETHLEHEM.

The indifference and neglect of the Jews:

“His own received Him not.” One stood amongst them whom they knew not.

The poverty of Jesus' crib.

The sufferings of St. Joseph on behalf of Mary and Jesus.

The persecution of Jesus by Herod.

The midnight flight into Egypt.

RESULT OF MARY'S JOYS AND SORROWS ACCEPTED FROM THE HAND OF GOD.

A great increase of divine grace.

Growth in holiness.

Glory given to God.

APPLICATION:

The Christian's life is composed of joys and sorrows.

These profit in so far as we accept them *from* God and *for* God.

Jesus brought sufferings to Mary and Joseph, as He brings them to all He loves and desires to sanctify.

Our acceptation of joys and sorrows must be all for God. Thus shall we become more like unto Jesus and Mary.

97. THE FEAST OF THE SEVEN DOLORS

"There stood by the cross of Jesus, His mother." (John xix. 25.)

INTRODUCTION:

Mary not only stood by the cross of Jesus on Calvary, but, from the moment of His birth, she shared His privations, sufferings, and ignominies. The Church, however, specially mentions seven sorrows which afflicted her holy soul. In these all her sorrows are included.

WHY DID MARY SUFFER, SINCE SHE HAD NEVER SINNED?

In order that she might
 Imitate her Divine Son.
 Glorify God by her fidelity.
 Acquire merit.
 Give us an example.

EACH OF THE SEVEN SORROWS HAD ITS PECULIAR BITTERNESS AND PAIN.

Simeon's prediction announced a *future* sorrow. Grief awaiting her and her Son—she knew not *when* to expect it.

The Flight into Egypt involved actual suffering—privation, poverty, exile.

By the loss of Jesus, Mary was deprived of His presence for three days, when she

and St. Joseph sought Him *sorrowing*.
(Luke ii. 48.)

When Mary met her Divine Son on the road to Calvary, she shared in the awful insults that were heaped upon Him.

At the Crucifixion, the nails that fixed Him to the cross pierced her soul. She stood there powerless to alleviate His sufferings. The Mother witnessed the agony of her Son.

When she contemplated the dead body of her Son, she knew in detail what His persecutors had inflicted upon Him. She did not turn away from the awful sight.

Jesus was laid in the tomb and His Blessed Mother, for a time, could no longer watch beside Him.

APPLICATION :

Learn from our Immaculate Mother's example

To suffer whatever it shall please God to send.

To rejoice to suffer *for* and *with* our dear Lord.

To realize that none enter the kingdom of heaven except "through great tribulations."

That suffering bravely endured purchases for the sufferer "above measure, an eternal weight of glory."

98. MARY AND THE INFANT CHURCH

The apostles "were persevering with one mind in prayer, with the women and Mary the Mother of Jesus, and with His brethren."
(Acts i. 14.)

INTRODUCTION:

Contemplate this chosen band of one hundred and twenty souls to whom God had given such special graces. There were gathered "the glorious company of the apostles," the future "noble army of martyrs," and the sinless Mother of God. They prayed and waited for the coming of the Spirit.

CONSIDER OUR LADY AFTER JESUS' DEATH.

Her sorrow, boundless as the ocean.

Her resignation.

Her firm confidence in God, knowing that her Son would rise again.

The assistance she gave His disciples.

MARY DURING THE GREAT FORTY DAYS.

She saw Jesus again and was glad, as her Son had predicted, glad in proportion to the depth of her sorrow.

She rejoiced in His glory.

Her life one constant "*Magnificat.*" He is risen. Alleluia!

CONSIDER HER ON MOUNT OLIVET.

How she enters into His glory.

How gladly she sees Him depart, her love is
so pure and unselfish.

CONTEMPLATE HER AFTER JESUS' ASCENSION,

She prays with His disciples.

She dwells with "the beloved disciple."

She ever converses concerning Jesus.

She encourages the apostles.

She reveals to the evangelists some of the
scenes of the infancy of Jesus.

She frequently visits Calvary—according to
a tradition.

She worships in the temple.

She receives holy communion from her
adopted son.

She ever consoles the afflicted and sorrowful.

She finally dies of the love of God (some fif-
teen years after Our Lord's Ascension).

APPLICATION:

We must love her who was

So dear to Jesus

And to the early Church.

We, too, can count on her assistance, for she
is our Mother also.

We should thank Our Lord for having given
us such a Mother.

99. OUR LADY'S GREATNESS

"Behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed." (Luke i. 48.)

INTRODUCTION:

Look back over the long course of ages and consider how the Catholic Church has ever honored Mary. Thus Our Lady's prediction has been, and is being, fulfilled; in heaven, likewise, all generations of the redeemed proclaim her "blessed among women."

CONSIDER THE ENTRANCE INTO THIS WORLD OF ANY ORDINARY HUMAN BEING.

Nothing known of this individual until a short time before his birth and that only within a narrow circle.

Nothing known of his future career.

After a few years of life, he passes hence and is forgotten. Such is the career of most mortals.

WHAT WAS KNOWN OF OUR LADY BEFORE HER BIRTH?

God spoke of her in Eden and promised that her seed should conquer the serpent.

She is typified in the Old Dispensation

By the Ark of the Covenant.

By Aaron's rod.

By Gedeon's fleece.

Isaias foretold that a virgin should conceive and bear a Son (vii. 14), that a Child should be born unto us (ix. 6)—a child presupposes the mother—and that this Son's kingdom should be everlasting.

HOW WERE THESE PREDICTIONS FULFILLED?

By her Immaculate Conception (a preparation).

By the Incarnation, Birth of Jesus, the words of St. Elizabeth at the Visitation, of Simeon at the Presentation.

By the love and honor which Jesus—as child, youth, and man—gave her.

By her participation in His passion.

By her place in the Infant Church.

By the honor paid to her in all ages by the Church.

By her glorious Assumption and Coronation.

APPLICATION:

Christians should

Rejoice in the possession of such a Mother.

Invoke her powerful aid.

Strive to imitate her virtues.

100. MARY, MOTHER AND MODEL OF
ALL THE FAITHFUL*"Behold thy Mother."* (John xix. 27.)

INTRODUCTION :

Mary, the Mother of Jesus, the second Eve, is given us as a Mother and Model. In her—a human being—we have the perfect pattern of all virtues. By imitating her, we become more like unto her Divine Son.

BEHOLD THY MOTHER UPON EARTH.

In prayer.

Mary was constant, fervent, reverent; ever mindful of God's glory and her neighbor's needs.

In work.

Our dear Lady was diligent, devoted, humble, and persevering.

In suffering.

Mary was patient, resigned, loving, joyful, and generous. She *ever* rejoiced in God her Saviour, even in tribulations.

BEHOLD THY MOTHER IN HEAVEN.

Seated on her throne of glory.

Crowned as Queen of angels and of men.

Mediating for the Church of God upon earth and in purgatory.

Working miracles in the many sanctuaries dedicated to her honor.

Invoked as the patron of numerous Religious Orders, Congregations, and Sodalties.

Honored by the universal Church as the Mother of Our Lord.

Waiting for each and all her true clients to be gathered into their eternal Home.

APPLICATION :

As Catholics and children of Mary we should

Meditate on the virtues of the Mother of Jesus.

Imitate her virtues, especially those in which we fail most.

Count upon her all-powerful intercession
In joy and sorrow.

In life and death.

Keep her feasts devoutly and invoke her daily.

Strive to make her known and loved.

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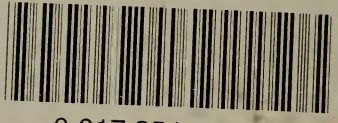
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